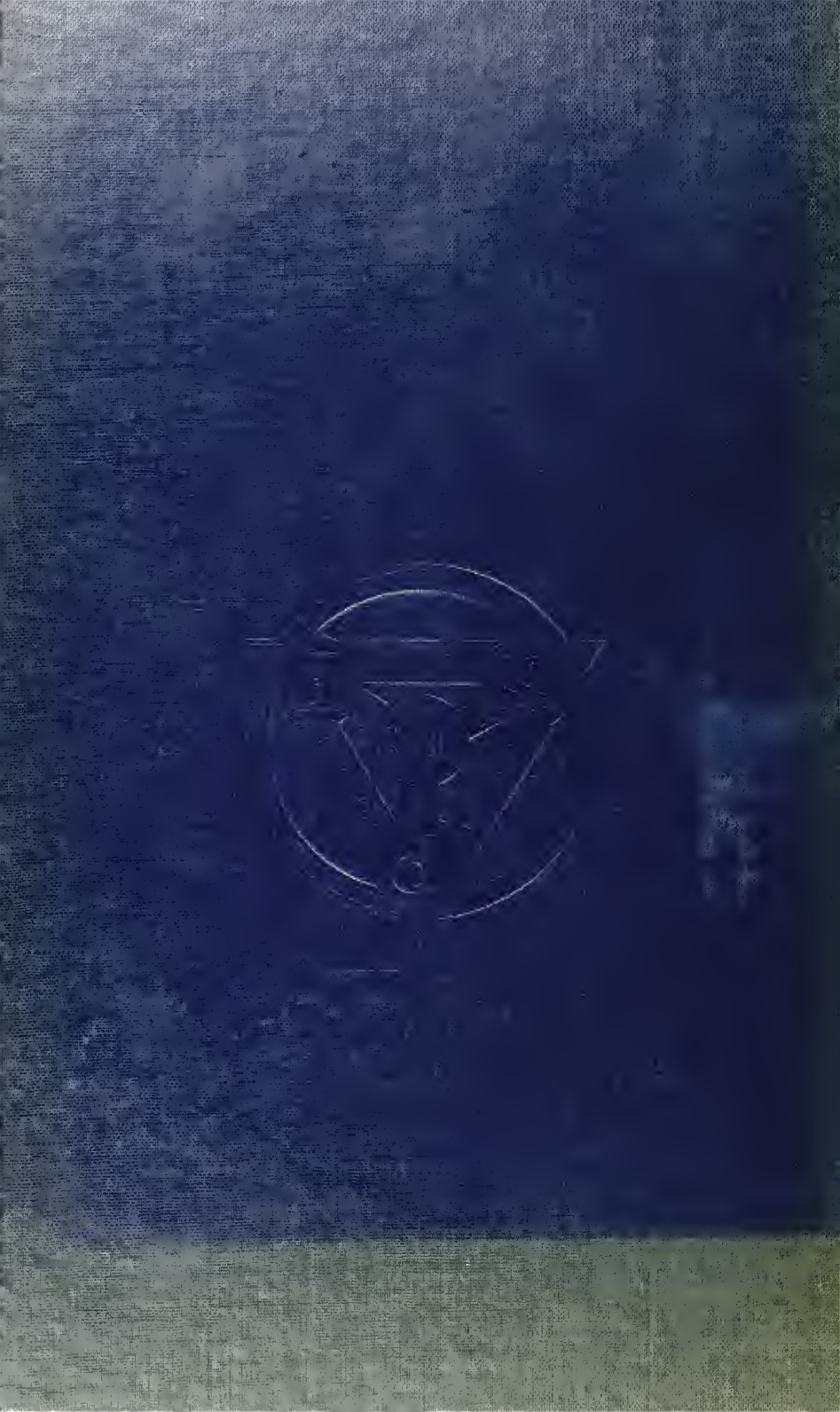

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# RELIGION IN AN AGE OF DOUBT

CHARLES J. SHEBBEARE, M.A.

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# EDITOR'S GENERAL PREFACE

IN no branch of human knowledge has there been a more lively increase of the spirit of research during the past few years than in the study of Theology.

Many points of doctrine have been passing afresh through the crucible; "re-statement" is a popular cry and, in some directions, a real requirement of the age; the additions to our actual materials, both as regards ancient manuscripts and archaeological discoveries, have never before been so great as in recent years; linguistic knowledge has advanced with the fuller possibilities provided by the constant addition of more data for comparative study; cuneiform inscriptions have been deciphered, and forgotten peoples, records, and even tongues, revealed anew as the outcome of diligent, skilful and devoted study.

Scholars have specialized to so great an extent that many conclusions are less speculative than they were, while many more aids are thus available for arriving at a general judgment; and, in some directions at least, the time for drawing such general conclusions, and so making practical use of such specialized research, seems to have come, or to be close at hand.

Many people, therefore, including the large mass of the parochial clergy and students, desire to have in an accessible form a review of the results of this flood of new light on many topics that are of living and vital interest to the Faith; and, at the same time, "practical" questions—by which is really denoted merely the application of faith to life and to the needs of the day—have certainly lost none of their interest, but rather loom larger than ever if the Church is adequately to fulfil her Mission.

It thus seems an appropriate time for the issue of a new series of theological works, which shall aim at presenting *a general survey* of the present position of thought and knowledge in various branches of the wide field which is included in the study of divinity.

The Library of Historic Theology is designed to supply such a series, written by men of known reputation as thinkers and scholars, teachers and divines, who are, one and all, firm upholders of the Faith.

It will not deal merely with doctrinal subjects, though prominence will be given to these; but great importance will be attached also to history—the sure foundation of all progressive knowledge—and even the more strictly doctrinal subjects will be largely dealt with from this point of view, a point of view the value of which in regard to the "practical" subjects is too obvious to need emphasis.

It would be clearly outside the scope of this series to deal with individual books of the Bible or of later Christian writings, with the lives of individuals, or with merely minor (and often highly controversial) points of Church governance, except in so far as these come into the general review of the situation. This detailed study, invaluable as it is, is already abundant in many series of commentaries, texts, biographies, dictionaries and monographs, and would overload far too heavily such a series as the present.

The Editor desires it to be distinctly understood that the various contributors to the series have no responsibility whatsoever for the conclusions or particular views expressed in any volumes other than their own, and that he himself has not felt that it comes within the scope of an editor's work, in a series of this kind, to interfere with the personal views of the writers. He must, therefore, leave to them their full responsibility for their own conclusions.

Shades of opinion and differences of judgment must exist, if thought is not to be at a standstill—petrified into an unproductive fossil; but while neither the Editor nor all their readers can be expected to agree with every point of view in the details of the discussions in all these volumes, he is convinced that the great principles which lie behind every volume are such as must conduce to the strengthening of the Faith and to the glory of God.

That this may be so is the one desire of Editor and contributors alike.

W. C. P.

LONDON.

# PREFACE

THE following pages—of which the substance was delivered in the form of lectures to the Vacation Term of Biblical Study in the Divinity School at Cambridge in 1911—may be described in the language of modern journalism as an 'open letter to the teachers of religion.'

Religious teachers of all grades—from the theological Professors in the Universities at one end of the scale to the Sunday School Teachers at the other—are engaged, and ought surely to feel that they are engaged, in a great co-operative enterprise. They are therefore all concerned in some measure with the same problems: and difficult though it necessarily is for any writer to gain the ear of an audience so varied, it can hardly be said that the attempt does not need to be made.

Voluntary association in a common work requires a common plan of campaign. 'Image the whole', said Mr. Browning, 'then execute the parts.' But this is a day of specialists: and while in the various departments of the study of religion there is appearing a great quantity of work of quite extraordinary brilliancy, it is only in a few circles that the conception of theology as a connected scheme of knowledge can be said to exist at all. Moreover our theologians have abandoned the habit, which marked the theology of the Middle Ages, of asking

clear and definite questions and formulating a definite answer.

In one sense the work of the Christian teacher is in every age the same. He must interpret, in relation to the duties and prevalent conceptions of his own time, the unchanging doctrines of the Gospel. It is sometimes said that the main difficulties of Christian work in the present generation are not theological or philosophical but moral. 'To be a real Christian to-day' says the Bishop of Oxford, 'involves a great deal of trouble about matters which are called social.' If justice is one of the weightier matters of the law, and if the present condemnation of those who do the unpleasantest part of the world's work to insufficient and precarious payment is contrary to justice, then the truth of the Bishop's words must be admitted. The Church has the duty of 'binding and loosing'; and it cannot discharge this duty by merely criticizing and rejecting in turn the various proposals for social remedy.

But if it is true that to be a Christian involves 'trouble about matters which are called social' it is none the less true that to be a Christian *teacher* involves trouble about matters which are called intellectual. Till Christianity has full possession of our minds it will never have complete influence upon our conduct. And the intellectual problems which now confront us are exceptionally difficult.

There are at the present moment, besides those schools of thought and piety with which the majority of Anglicans are most familiar, three great religious movements doing active work in the world, yet working in almost complete

isolation from one another. There is, first, English Evangelicalism; there is, secondly, the moral and doctrinal theology of the Church of Rome; there is, thirdly, that far-reaching tendency in the religious thought of Germany which is associated with the name of Ritschl. This theological situation, taken as a whole, presents us with a momentous question. The following essay is an attempt to disentangle this question from others which tend to obscure its importance. Are we, in a word, to accept the theological revolution which 'Ritschlianism' seeks to accomplish; and if we accept it, how are we to set out upon the work of reconstruction that must follow? If this question is once fairly faced, however it may be answered, English theology can hardly remain just what it is now.

The special purpose of the present volume has necessitated an arrangement and naming of Chapters which may in itself provoke criticism. 'What *can* be the value of a book'—it may be said—'which deals with Evangelicalism in ten pages, Buddhism and Judaism in eight, the Doctrine of the Trinity in twenty? If the writer who proceeds on these methods is suspected of mere indolent "book-making", he has only himself to thank.'

It is, perhaps, a sufficient answer that one chief aim of this volume is to point a very simple moral—to urge the importance for every Christian teacher of a comprehensive conception of his subject.

The specialist is, unquestionably, a very valuable person. To trace (let us say) the mental development of Kant or of Ritschl—to shew minutely the changes in their view between one edition and another—is to do an

excellent work. But it is more important, after all, to know what the teaching of Kant and Ritschl is *about*, and what their relation is to our own problems. Such comprehensive knowledge is not only the more valuable in itself: it is also the one condition on which the other kind of knowledge can attain any value whatsoever. The specialist, therefore, like the bee, is often labouring rather for others than for himself.

It is well, then, that we should ask whether the present reaction against the encyclopaedic methods of the past is not being carried too far. Are we not missing, in theology as in other pursuits, a great opportunity? Is it right that theology should become a merely antiquarian study? May it not be that, if we would rely less on tradition and more on the Holy Spirit, we might justly hope to produce—even before the present century has run its course—a theory of the Universe which shall be as much in advance of that of Hegel, as Hegel himself is in advance of St. Thomas Aquinas?

But while these latter questions are for the future, the two already mentioned seem to press for immediate answer.

First: Has our theology—has even all the theology which calls itself Liberal—really learned the lesson of Ritschl? Have we sufficiently recognized that, for the individual, the Christian *life* is in large measure independent of Christian *doctrine*: that the plain man who knows but little theology, and perhaps even rejects what he knows, may yet, by moral insight and by the experience of sin forgiven, gain such a knowledge of Christ as shall enable him to take his place as an active member

of Christ's Body—a partaker through Christ of the Life of God?

Secondly: When the Ritschlian lesson is once completely learned, will it not then be needful to look back? The individual Christian can live without theology: the Church at large can never dispense with it. We have not yet, however, made full use of those older intellectual methods which Ritschlianism has tended to displace. We have not yet exhausted the religious value of the old-fashioned 'proofs' of God's existence. Perhaps, then, when we have sat a little longer at the feet of Ritschl,[1] we shall find time to recur to the older methods with the added insight which his teaching has brought us, and so to lay the foundations of a doctrinal system which basing itself upon a knowledge of the present reality of God's pardoning Grace, shall at the same time furnish a rational ground for the hope of future Glory.

I wish to express my gratitude to my old friend Mr. Clement Webb (Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford), and to my neighbour Mr. Philip Malleson (Vicar of Great Tew), for many most useful suggestions. The value of what I have learned in discussions with Mr. Webb and other friends—and, above all, from the teaching and influence of my Father—is quite beyond my power to estimate.

[1] In the days of *Lux Mundi*, Ritschl had, in England, hardly yet appeared above the horizon. For the writers of *Foundations* he has already sunk some way below it. The noonday of his influence upon Anglican Oxford may, conceivably, have synchronized with the appearance of *Contentio Veritatis*: but it would not be easy to prove this from its pages. His treatment of Ritschl is the chief defect—perhaps the only defect—of Archdeacon Peile's admirable Bampton Lectures.

# SYLLABUS

I A PRACTICAL PROBLEM. II. THE RIVAL METHODS.

A large—probably an increasing—number of our contemporaries may be described as men who believe in Duty without believing in God. This fact forces the Christian preacher to consider what is the ultimate foundation of Christian doctrine. Is its true basis in personal experience or in supernatural revelation? Are the facts on which it primarily rests events occurring to-day, or events which occurred long ago?

III THEOLOGY PAST AND PRESENT.

The answer to these questions which is given by the Ritschlian School is well-known. Ritschl teaches (*a*) that Christian theology must base itself on the personal experience of 'justification' through Christ: (*b*) that religious knowledge and scientific knowledge cannot be united in a single homogeneous system. We shall find that he is right in the first, and wrong in the second, of these assertions. We shall conclude that theology, while needing the complete revision which he demands, cannot be limited as he would limit it: that if it is to make good its claim to survive in the modern world at all, it must—while admitting to the full the claims of freedom in thought—seek to regain its old position as Queen of the Sciences: that the construction of such a philosophic theology is the best method of giving intellectual support to religion in an age of doubt.

IV MORALITY. V DUTY.

How far will the method which relies solely on moral and spiritual experience carry us? First, it can show —by the kind of arguments used by Kant—the absolute supremacy of Duty.

VI GUILT.

From the knowledge of Duty as an 'Imperative' arises the recognition of universal guilt—'conviction of sin'.

VII DELIVERANCE FROM GUILT.

All the higher religions seek deliverance from Guilt: but this deliverance cannot really be attained either (*a*) by asceticism and gradual self-purification, as attempted in Buddhism, or (*b*) by 'good works' and moral behaviour, as in Pharisaic Judaism and the common morality of the world. Both these methods are found by the awakened conscience to be insufficient.

VIII CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity seeks deliverance from guilt not by 'works' but by 'faith': and this 'faith' is interpreted in Christian practice as an act of will—a wholesale surrender of the will to God. 'Justification by faith' is not to be interpreted as implying 'justification by orthodoxy'. The unique success of the distinctive Christian method can be learned in spiritual experience.

IX CHRIST; and X THE HISTORICAL JESUS.

The successful application of the Christian method is found in practice to be associated invariably with submission to the influence of Jesus: Whom we may truly claim as its Author.

XI EVANGELICALISM; and XII. THE KESWICK SCHOOL.

Thus the method which relies on experience can establish the supremacy of Christianity, and its essential connexion with Christ. But an assent to the claims of Christ which remains merely intellectual is not yet religious. Knowledge of Christianity does not become religious till it has been proved by personal obedience. The personal adoption of Evangelical methods in the inward life—even apart from the acceptance of Christian dogma—will reveal to us spiritual laws 'valid for every rational being.'

XIII THE RITSCHLIAN REVOLUTION. XIV RITSCHLIANISM AND CHRISTOLOGY

The systematic statement of these laws, as verified in experience, is the true basis of Christian theology. The doctrines of Grace, of Adoption, of the Holy Spirit,

of the absolute supremacy of Jesus Christ in the spiritual sphere, and of His absolute claim to our obedience, can be established by this method alone.

XV THE 'ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN.'

But the Ritschlian theology has its limitations. The mere appeal to experience cannot establish the belief in a Future Life, the traditional Christian doctrine of special Providence, or the belief in the 'personality' of the Creator. We must therefore reconsider those 'rationalistic' arguments—such as the 'Argument from Design'—upon which Ritschlianism has looked coldly. The Argument from Design, revised and restated, establishes an optimistic view of the Universe which (for those who accept the Christian standard of *values*) involves Theism.

(1) Defects of the argument as it stands. (Just as popular materialism explains the world by atoms, but does not account for the existence of the atoms themselves, so popular Theism explains the world as the work of God, but leaves the existence of God unexplained and inexplicable.)

(2) Yet the argument contains a correct thought. The beauty and harmony in the forms and colours of Nature is recognized by reason as an 'end in itself'. The same is true of other occurrences in the world, e.g. the moral and intellectual life of man. In virtue of this realization of 'ends' approved by reason we pronounce the world a 'rational' whole. If we can truly say 'It is no accident that in Nature rational ends are realized' we are affirming a belief in the rationality of the world which—if thought out—involves a general Optimism.

XVI A FUTURE LIFE.

Such an Optimism if accepted must be carried out to its natural conclusion. For those who accept the Christian belief in the supreme value of conscious life, and the goodness of matter, Optimism involves the hope of heaven and of a bodily resurrection.

But the thinking out of such a thorough-going Optimism as this entangles us in difficulties which only a philosophical theology can hope to solve.

XVII THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AND THE INCARNATION. XVIII. THE TASK OF THE FUTURE. XIX THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

We find ourselves led by the seand similar considerations to the following principles :—

(*a*) Religious knowledge must begin in personal moral judgments and spiritual experience.

(*b*) The 'rationalistic' arguments which lead to an optimistic view of the Universe are valid.

Thus our religious judgments cannot be kept apart from our view of the world in general. Theology must develop a Theory of the Universe.

(*c*) Such a constructive task, if undertaken systematically, will involve a philosophical criticism and 'reconstruction' of our common notion of the world.

It is our duty, if we accept these principles, to apply them boldly to such theological questions as those of 'the doctrine of the Trinity', the 'atonement', 'miracles', the 'Sacraments', etc., etc.

And first of all it is necessary to give definite answers to certain preliminary questions. What is to be our conception of Sin ? What is to be our doctrine of Forgiveness ? Again, are we to retain the time-honoured opposition between 'Reason' and 'Revelation', or should the modern theologian avow as his aim the establishment of a Christian Rationalism ?

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# Religion in an Age of Doubt

## CHAPTER I

## A PRACTICAL PROBLEM

'ALL the religious convictions which I have been able to retain,' said a thoughtful Undergraduate recently, 'might be written on the back of a single Postage-stamp.'

The words were spoken as if they were felt to be the record of a total decay of faith. And such indeed they may actually have been.

Yet it would surely have been well that any one who heard them should bear in mind that the contrary and more hopeful view was also tenable. This meagre remnant of religious conviction, if it included—as appeared to be the case—a sincere belief in the absolute supremacy of Duty, may well have been of far more worth than the speaker himself imagined.

The Gospel speaks of 'faith like unto a grain of mustard seed.' Such faith, it is implied, has immeasurable powers of further development. May it not be then that—just as the seed is the germ of the completed tree—so a genuine faith in the supreme claims of Duty is the germ, if not of all that is of value, at any rate of all that

is in the strictest sense vital, in the theology of Christendom ?

The question deserves, at least, a serious answer. The worthlessness of 'bare morality' has been, as we know, a common theme with preachers: and if our 'morality' is mere self-interested conformity to established custom, it then merits a great part of what has been said in its dispraise. To the Christian, who, like Bunyan, has descended into the depths of religious conflict, the doctrines of 'Mr. Legality of the town of Morality' will always appear to be not merely inadequate but a snare, since the greatest of all obstacles to repentance is self-satisfied virtue. But if, on the other hand, Duty and the Moral Law are taken, not in this superficial sense, but in the graver significance in which the words are used by Kant—if they involve the belief in a perpetually valid 'Imperative,' a command which we cannot disobey without incurring guilt and condemnation—then the sincere recognition of what Duty means, coupled with the perception that the Law which it implies is one to which man never fully attains, leads directly to that 'Conviction of Sin' which it is the characteristic aim of Christian preaching to produce. And Conviction of Sin is a stepping-stone to further knowledge. Apart from the sense of personal guilt, the Christian conception of Salvation must be wholly unintelligible; but when this sense of guilt exists in an effective form, there is always a hope that the meaning of Salvation as Christianity conceives it will become plain by contrast.

This subject has an importance which is not merely theoretical. It has a direct bearing on the work of the

preacher, the apologist, and the theologian. How, for example, is the Christian preacher to address himself to those who believe in Duty but not in God? How is he to seek to convince the minds of the 'Godless good' —of the men to whom Duty and Righteousness mean much and God means little or nothing?

It is with special reference to this practical problem [1] that the following pages have been written. Unbelief of this particular type is already common in all classes of society, and it is probably on the increase. In many minds—too serious and thoughtful to be shaken in their moral convictions—religious doubt is still the natural product of physical enlightenment. And the more physical knowledge is disseminated—as it must be and ought to be disseminated—among the masses of our people, the greater probably will be the growth, at least for a time, of materialistic unbelief.

In some quarters, no doubt, it is the fashion to speak as if materialistic unbelief belonged to a byegone generation. 'When,' said an elegant critic, 'I read a book like Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*, I murmur gently to myself the words "A.D. 1860."' But such light-hearted contempt—whether real or affected—is out of place. Whatever may have been the merits or demerits of this particular book—and some of its merits were great —the creed of which it is an able exposition is always a formidable foe to religion. It strikes its roots so deep in what Lotze called the 'natural theory' [2] of reality, that

[1] It should not be assumed that a pastoral aim is intrinsically inconsistent with intellectual frankness. Nor is it inconceivable that by frankly rationalistic methods we may reach an unexpectedly conservative conclusion.

[2] Lotze, *Metaphysic*, Eng. Trans., vol., i., pp. 29, 35, 36.

we may reasonably expect to see the debate with materialism still in active progress when many of the questions which seem more interesting at the present moment have been long forgotten.

At any rate the materialistic view is widely prevalent now; and it has great influence even in religious circles. In spite of the philosophical work that has been done—since 1860—by T. H. Green and others, questions are still asked, by well-informed men favourably disposed to religion, which betray a lurking fear that if religious beliefs were brought fairly out into the open they would not long be able to defend themselves successfully against the assaults of Science. "All physical changes,"—we hear it said—"including the changes of the weather, appear to be linked by unchanging laws to events that have preceded them. What room then is left for the action of divine Providence? All our mental life seems to be dependent upon processes taking place within the brain—processes which are as much subject to physical law as the weather or the tides. What place then is left for the influence of the Holy Spirit? Again is not Christianity explainable by anthropological methods as itself a mere natural phenomenon? Can it any longer, in the light of recent discoveries, even assert its uniqueness among the religions of the world? Have not savage religions anticipated both its dogmas and its rites? Can we then show any real evidence that the 'Hand of God' has been at work in Nature, in history, even in the history of religion? And is the notion of God—as an omnipresent invisible Being, holding in His mind at once all the complicated contents of the Universe[1]—really

[1] Haeckel, *Riddle of the Universe*, popular edition, p. 97.

conceivable at all? Is not such a God a contradiction in terms? The only invisible substances which we can readily conceive of as filling space are certain gases. The common notion of God, therefore—it has been suggested[1]—regards Him as a 'gaseous vertebrate': and if we seriously try to think out our religious notions into clearness is it not to some such unmeaning contradiction that we shall ultimately be reduced? Again, is it possible to disentangle even the most impressive doctrines of religion from the antiquated theory of the world with which they are traditionally associated? If we cease to believe in Heaven as a place beyond the sky, what conception of Heaven are we to substitute? And do not similar difficulties crop up on every side? Christ appears to have looked forward to collecting all nations before His judgment seat. Could He have framed this conception if He had rightly estimated the numbers of the human race? Where on the earth[2] is room for such a scene of judgment to be found? And are not the moral difficulties in the conception of Divine Judgment even greater than the physical ones? Is not God too far responsible Himself for the evil of the world to occupy the judicial throne? Is it not—in dealing with an Omnipotent Being—something of an evasion to say that He merely 'permits' evil? Must He not be conceived as 'causing' it?[3] For even if we can acquit Him of complicity with the evil wrought by the free will of man, did He not still implant the evil tendencies and passions by which that free will has been seduced? Is it then substantially unfair if we complain that, having enmeshed us round

[1] Haeckel, *Riddle of the Universe*, popular edition, pp. 93 and 102.

[2] Acts i. 11.

[3] Isa. xlv. 7.

with predestination, He has no right to 'impute our fall to sin'?[1] Moreover is not 'predestination'—or at least 'determinism' of some kind—the only scientific theory? To Dr. Johnson's assertion that we 'know our wills are free, and there is an end of the matter,' might we not retort with truth that we 'know' that our conscious life is dependent on the brain? Lastly, do not the physicists threaten that one day they will prove—by the actual production of a living organism in the laboratory—their right to explain on mechanical principles all the phenomena of life and consciousness?"

To such questions, of course, we can often give an answer which sounds effective in debate. The materialistic arguments—we may say—prove too much. The argument that 'a God invisibly present must be conceived as gaseous or nothing' might equally be used to prove the non-existence of the human mind. Our feelings and thoughts, though invisible and immaterial, are certainly real. If then an immaterial mind is possible, why not an immaterial God?[2] Again—when it is said that

[1] See *Omar Khayyam*, stanza 57.

[2] The rejoinder is sometimes made that mental life is only physical life regarded in another aspect. If this mode of expression serves provisionally for the clearer statement of any psychological problem, we have no right to object to it. But as an ultimate account of the facts it is obviously unsatisfactory. We find two quite distinguishable objects of experience—matter and consciousness. If, because he finds it hard to explain how these two are related, the physicist cuts the knot by declaring that they are not two facts but one, he merely shows that science may have its evasions no less than theology.

Some of the other 'difficulties' mentioned above are incidentally touched upon later. Does the conception of a God who is 'attentive at all times to millions of contradictory prayers'

there is no 'room' for divine action—it may be shown that on the contrary, physical and spiritualistic explanations may be valid side by side. The fact that one explanation is within its own limits complete, does not always exclude the right to demand another. The colour of an animal, for example, is due to the chemical elements that compose its body. But even if our explanation of its colouring is chemically complete, we may still seek to account for these tints by the part they have played in the evolution of the species.[1] Similarly a complete physical explanation of all the elements of our mental life, if such a thing were possible, would not prove that no more remained to be said. The fact that the explanation was physically complete would not prove our mental and moral life to be the mere accidental product of physical forces. Even in the supposed case of the living organism produced in the laboratory, the physical factors would not be the whole story. It would be absurd to say that 'no room is left' for any other; for we must leave 'room' at least for one other factor—the mental labours of the producer. Indeed the analogy might seem to make rather in favour of the doctrine of an Intelligent 'Designer' of the world than against it.

But we need something better—something more

(Haeckel, p. 97) differ in principle from the case of the debater who sees in a flash of thought all the divisions and subdivisions of an elaborate reply?

[1] The chemical explanation of formic acid—once supposed to require 'vital force' for its production—is so complete that the acid can be produced by artificial means. But this fact does not forbid us to seek an evolutionary explanation of the occurrence of formic acid in ants and nettles.

systematic—than 'good debating answers.'[1] The fact is that the character of the explanation which satisfies a man's mind depends on the particular phenomena with which he happens to be familiar. The man who is concerned simply with physical phenomena will rest contented with physical explanations. The man who has observed chiefly the phenomena of the moral life will often be satisfied with theories that take insufficient account of physical facts. Each however has a right to be heard. The impression of physical uniformity is no illusion: but neither again is the sense of moral guilt an illusion. And the intellectual problem has not been solved till both these classes of facts have been adequately and systematically accounted for—a conclusion which is quite in agreement with the view that the sense of Duty and of Guilt is the foundation stone of Christian Apologetics.

[1] It would be especially well worth while to set out in systematic form some of the apologetic arguments which sound impressive in poetry. As Wordsworth wrote of the 'intimations of immortality' which may be derived 'from recollections of early childhood,' so Mr. Browning has given us his intimations of immortality from recollections of the Morgue at Paris. M. Bourget's romance *Le Disciple* closes with a somewhat similar piece of reasoning. There is indeed even an element of humour in trying to picture the impression which these passages of literature must leave upon the minds, say, of Prof. Karl Pearson, or Dr. J. G. Frazer, or Miss Jane Harrison. The connexion of thought is plain enough, no doubt, to all who have understood the presuppositions in the minds of the authors. But the arguments, as arguments, would be of greater theological value if set out in systematic shape.

## CHAPTER II

## THE RIVAL METHODS

EVEN more important then than the relations between religion and physical knowledge, is the question as to the ultimate ground on which Christianity must rest its own case. Is its appeal to be primarily an appeal to the individual conscience, or is it to be based wholly or mainly upon the evidence of historical events, such as the miracles of Christ and His Apostles?

When the Apostles set out on their mission,—says the *Lyra Apostolica*—

> They argued not, but preached; and conscience did the rest.[1]

Yet the view that Christian preaching should make its appeal primarily to the conscience is often disputed, and disputed by representatives of the very school of thought from which the *Lyra Apostolica* proceeded.

'The Gospel,' we are told 'signifies "good news," and not "good advice," and therefore rests not on an appeal to men's subjective moral convictions, but on the witness of objective facts.' The Apostle—it is pointed out—asserts that the Gospel which he preached consisted in statements concerning the Death and Resurrection of his Master.[2] The conclusion drawn is that Christian be-

[1] *Lyra Apostolica*. lxxx.

[2] 1 Cor. xv.

lief is essentially a belief in certain historical occurrences in the first century of our era.

The Dean of St. Paul's, indeed, has gone so far as to argue[1] that a non-historical Christianity is not Christianity at all, that if we 'separate Christianity from the historical Christ' we shall get 'one of three results —either the thinly disguised paganism of Southern Europe, a religion only fit for children and savages: or the deliberate sophistication which keeps idealism in reserve for the educated, and trades on the superstitions of the vulgar: or a pure mysticism which has no real connection with Christianity.' How the Dean has arrived at this threefold division of our dangers is not clear: but it is evident that so assured a statement by so able a writer is worthy of our consideration, and that the question, therefore, as to the ultimate basis of the Christian claims cannot be dismissed as a subject on which no controversy exists and no decision is needed.[2]

We are, in fact, called to decide here between two radically different theories. We are told on the one hand —to put the theory in its most thorough-going, and at the same time most consistent, form—that all that is char-

[1] *The Guardian*, May 13, 1910.

[2] If any one thinks it needless to address to theologians the simple and elementary argument of the present chapter, let him read Tanquerey's criticism of the Kantian ethics (*Synopsis Theologiæ Moralis et Pastoralis*. Tom. II. secs. 49–64.) This learned, candid, amiable, and most lucid writer has produced a criticism of which it is not too much to say that it is fundamentally unintelligent. To make morality dependent upon theological propositions is to argue in a circle: since apart from moral ideas God, as Christians conceive God, cannot even be defined.

acteristic in the Christian religion, all that distinguishes it from a barren Deism, is contained in certain doctrines which we are not required to judge on their merits, but to accept by faith: that we have no faculties for passing judgment on these doctrines, since 'God's ways are higher than our ways,' and 'what is wisdom with the world may be foolishness with God': that therefore the only course is to take them on the authority of accredited teachers, especially of One 'declared to be the Son of God with power by His Resurrection from the dead.' The evidence for this and other miracles—it is argued—may be made good by solid historical reasoning, and so must afford a far firmer support for religious conviction than can be given by the shifting uncertainty of our inward intuitions.

The opposite theory must rely on other texts and other arguments. It will maintain that he who 'willeth to do God's Will, will know of the doctrine, whether it be of God': [1] that the 'honest and good heart' applied to the hearing of the special call which the Gospel makes, is the only condition annexed by Scripture to the bearing of good fruit: that such a heart will 'of itself judge that which is right:' [2] and thus that Christianity must show its characteristic power primarily by the new type of inward life and outward service to which it calls us. The conclusion will be that if Christianity cannot make good its distinctive claims to our obedience by an appeal to our moral consciousness, its distinctive claims can never be made good at all.

The difference between these two theories will at once

[1] St. John vii. 17.
[2] St. Luke viii. 15, xii. 57.

show itself in practice. The former, if it acts consistently, must bid us approach the sinner with *Paley's Evidences* or some similar authority in our hand; in order that he may be convinced at once of those miraculous occurrences on which alone, as the theory alleges, rest the claims of Christ to be accepted as the Saviour of the world. The other theory would lead us to adopt the method of calling the sinner first to repentance, bidding him take upon himself the yoke of obedience to Christ's moral commands, and leave the belief in miracles to come to him later—if so it should happen—after the work of reconciliation with God is accomplished. It would not be too much to say that till the question between these two theories is settled one way or the other, it is impossible to take any one step in Theology securely.

Let us consider first, then, the theory, which, bidding us distrust the judgments of our own moral consciousness, asserts that Christianity stands or falls with the evidence for certain historical events.

The best way, perhaps, of judging this method of reliance on supernatural evidence, is to suppose it entirely successful. Let us suppose that we had at hand the fullest external evidence that the nature of the case admits. Let us suppose that the leaders of the Christian Church could now perform miracles such as even their adversaries must recognise as genuine. Let us suppose also that historical evidence was found which strengthened the probability for the Resurrection and other miracles of our Saviour, till it became to all intents and purposes a certainty, not for the Christian believer only but for every student of history. How much of the case in

favour of Christianity would this purely external evidence be able to prove?

It is surely clear that it must wholly fail to prove the one thing with which the religious man is most seriously concerned—namely the moral claim of Christianity upon our obedience. If we really left it an open question whether our sense of the holiness of the Christ of Whom we read in the Gospels, and of the purity of His Law, was a correct judgment or a delusion, we might still perhaps prove by the evidence of miracles that Christ was sent by the Creator and Ruler of the world, and that it would be to our interest here and hereafter to take Christ's side against His enemies: but that obedience to the Gospel was right as well as prudent, and disobedience essentially sinful as well as unwise, we could not show. An act does not become right merely because it has the approval of the strongest Being in the Universe as such: and if we were really incapable of perceiving that He of Whom we read in the Gospel is holy, and His teaching pure, no weight of external authority could show it us. The story of the half-witted peasant woman, who—on being told that the final battle between good and evil had been fought, and that it was God and not the Devil who had been vanquished—said that none the less she should still remain faithful to her Master, presents us with a far nobler conception than that which relies on miracles and external power as the ultimate basis of authority in religion.

The contention that the final appeal must be to external facts rather than to the inward witness of conscience may often be presented, it is true, in an attractive form. It chimes in with that deep-seated sense of

dependence and distrust of self which is essential to true religion. It agrees also with the quite reasonable tendency, which appears in men who have already perceived the moral value of Christian teaching, to turn to external authority for the solution of perplexities which still remain. The Evangelical, who, when troubled with doubts concerning his own Salvation, is reassured by the universality of the promises in the 'Written Word'; the Catholic penitent, who allows his fears to be overcome because of the sentence of absolution which the Church pronounces; are both examples of the same eminently sane belief that the Bible or the Church, the accepted guides of millions of our fellow-men, are in some respects more worthy of trust than private scruples of our own. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*, and 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' are both in their respective ways just maxims: and both call us away from our individual selves to something which is in a sense external to us. Yet it is surely clear that neither the one maxim nor the other can ever attain to the rank of a personal conviction, apart from a basis of private moral judgment—a judgment that has recognized that in many unquestionable respects the general constitution of the world is good; and therefore trusts that mankind will not be utterly deceived or misled, even in matters that at present seem obscure.

A lack of ultimate confidence, then, in our own moral judgments would in the end undermine Religion. After we have perceived for ourselves Christ's right to our allegiance, it may produce in us an infinite spiritual exhilaration—it may beget us again unto a lively hope[1]—

[1] 1 St. Pet. i. 3.

to become convinced that He rose from the dead. But apart from the power to perceive, by an act of moral judgment, that He has this claim upon us, the evidence of the Resurrection will have no religious significance for us whatever. A theology indeed, which should take an ultimate reliance on miracles, and a distrust of our own spiritual insight, as serious principles, would be the helpless prey of the 'lying wonders'[1] foretold in Scripture. So soon as the False Prophet could claim that the preponderance of miracles was on his side, the theologians of this school must desert the cause of Christ and go over to the enemy.[2]

It follows that the first step in the acceptance of the Christian Religion—the perception of its intrinsic claim

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 9.

[2] It is important here to separate distinct issues. Miracles are not the primary ground for belief in Christianity: but it does not follow that no miracles have ever occurred. Again, it is true that in the last resort we must trust our own moral judgments (since even acceptance of authority is an act of private judgment): but it does not follow that we should be right in desiring to exclude at any point the operation of the Holy Ghost. The truth is the very opposite. It is only when we distinguish clearly in practice between our own personal discoveries and the beliefs we have taken on trust from others, that we learn to find in the former the one convincing evidence of the Spirit's reality and power.

Further, we must distinguish the various objects to which in this connexion our faculty of moral judgment needs to be applied. There is, first, the special and distinctive moral ideal which Christianity expresses. This would remain unchanged even though the whole of Christian history were proved fictitious. There is, secondly, Christianity as a phenomenon of the modern world, with its Bible, its Sacraments, its public activities, its private victories of grace. The man of learning is often unaware how much it is the Christianity of the present which is the real witness of God to those who read the Bible in the English. Yet no clergyman, who keeps his eyes open and knows Christian

upon our obedience—is a step which our moral faculties must take alone, unaided by the evidence of signs, or wonders, or mighty works.

piety when he sees it, can long be of opinion that a 'non-historical Christianity is not Christianity at all' unless his clerical experience is gained almost exclusively in academic circles. Thirdly, there is the Christianity of the past, especially the Christianity of the first century, which even for the scholar raises many obscure and intricate problems. If the claims of Christianity rested upon history, in any strict sense of the word, then they would be resting upon knowledge which can come to the ordinary believer at second hand only.

## CHAPTER III

## THEOLOGY, PRESENT AND PAST

ONE of the chief facts of the present theological situation is the influence exerted, both in England and in Scotland, by the school of Ritschl.

This school of thought had its origin among men trained in modern methods of research—men who though they had abandoned the traditional beliefs concerning the divine creation and government of the world, had none the less felt the unique power of Christ and His Gospel to bring peace and decisive victory into the inward life.

Thus the relation between these teachers and the problem with which we are here concerned is plain. The two principal doctrines which the Ritschlian school advances may be provisionally expressed in the following statements—first, that Christianity can justify itself by an appeal to spiritual experience,[1] and by that only; secondly, that religious knowledge belongs to so special a department of human life, and is of so special a character, that we cannot—as the theologians of the past have tried to do—unite religious and other knowledge in a single system. Knowledge of God and scientific knowledge of the world are regarded as quite disconnected pursuits.

[1] For the two senses of the word 'experience' compare note on p. 137.

In theology, according to the Ritschlian view, it is not only our first step which depends on spiritual experience (as we have already seen to be the case), but all the succeeding steps likewise.

It will make the purport of the following pages clearer to state here in outline the conclusion to which they lead. Briefly, it is that the Ritschlian school is right in the one assertion, and wrong in the other: right in affirming the dependence of theology on the appeal to experience, wrong in denying the possibility of uniting in a single scheme religious and physical knowledge. The question will then remain whether the older theology has conceived this 'single scheme' in a satisfactory manner.

One whole department of religious knowledge is based on experience directly and immediately. The doctrines of Sin, of Grace, of Personal Salvation through Christ—though commonly associated with the orthodox dogma concerning Christ's Person—are still, as Ritschl has shown, not absolutely inseparable from it. On religious experience, on the other hand, they are entirely dependent.

The facts which in this connexion we shall have first to consider relate to the contact of the believer with Christ, His example and His law[1]; to the effect of this contact in delivering men from the sense of guilt and the power of temptation; to the peculiar spell which Jesus has thrown upon His followers, which is such that they have not hesitated, either in theory or in practice, to treat Him as equal with God. If we find that this influence is not merely powerful with other men, but that we ourselves

[1] St. John xv. 3.

yield to it willingly and with our eyes open, convinced that apart from it all that is best in our lives would vanish away—if this same willing consent to subjection to Christ continues unweakened, even when we come to doubt or to reject the received dogmas of theology, so that His influence has still for us the 'value of God' in the sense that we neither want nor can conceive anything higher or better than it—we are then bound as reasonable men to give some theoretical account of experiences which possess so distinct a character. If this is how we regard the Founder of Christianity, then—even if we adopted a wholly materialistic theory of the Universe so far as concerns its origin and future fate—we might still assert that the world is not a 'Godless' world since it has contained Jesus: we should still have the foundations for a high Christological theory, even though it be something very different from the Christology of the early Church. And thus our conclusion would be that though the traditional theology may need a drastic revision, there is in it much which is worthy of profoundly respectful study.

But, secondly, though the Ritschlian school has done excellent work in showing how the true basis of Christian theology lies in Christian experience, there are other respects in which it has failed. It has not always done justice to the work of the older divines: especially to those arguments by which Paley and others have sought to establish an optimistic theory of the Universe. Dr. Bosanquet [1] has spoken of the 'permanent meaning of the Argument from Design,' and Kant in his day used somewhat similar language. We shall find that, in spite of grave defects of statement and of conception, the Argument from

[1] *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. ii. p. 44.

Design, alike in its ancient and modern forms, contains a thought that is both profound and correct. The Christians of the first age, who believed themselves to have known God in the inner life as the Holy Spirit, who also had recognized an immediate revelation of God in human form in Jesus, were convinced that the same Divine Will, in spite of sin and evil, was truly working itself out in Nature and in human history, and that the Creator and Governor of the Universe might be known as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the face of abundant temptations to Pessimism, their view of the world remained Optimistic: and their Optimism was of that thoroughgoing sort from which it would follow that if the position of Jesus in the Universe is that of King *de jure*, He is also King *de facto*. The doctrinal outcome of this faith was the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation. The Christian recognition of Christ as Lord, joined with such a Theism as was dominant in the intellectual world of the first four centuries, required that Christ should be recognized as 'Consubstantial with the Father.'[1] We have only to turn to the heresies which at various stages confronted the orthodox dogma as its rivals, to see how deep a gratitude we owe to the orthodox Greek Fathers for the intellectual courage which asserted, in the only form in which it could in their day have been asserted effectively, the optimistic faith which is native to the Christian spirit.

But can we rest absolutely satisfied with Christian theology as it took shape by the time of the Council of Chalcedon? This is our remaining question and we shall find that we must answer it in the negative. The

[1] See chap. xvii. below.

theology of the Greek Fathers was a most serious and heroic attempt: but it is hard to see how any candid critic can think it wholly successful. The difficulties of the traditional theology have become in recent times peculiarly evident: and the embarrassment will be found to be on the side, not of those who deny its complete consistency, but of those who try to maintain it. Thus we shall conclude that the absolute homage which the Christian spirit renders to Christ, has not yet found its final theological expression.

Such a conclusion implies that the task which still awaits the theologian is indeed gigantic. Sir Oliver Lodge, in a happy phrase, has expressed the doubt whether theology has yet found its Newton. We shall see, more and more clearly as we proceed, that no theological formula has been put forward which deserves to be treated as being at all on the same level with the great generalization by which Newton brought unity into the realm of physical knowledge. Indeed the utmost that we can hope for in our generation is that we may do some of the preliminary work by which the task of the theological Newton shall be made easier when he comes.

If it is feared that the undertaking of so vast an intellectual task as is here suggested is inconsistent with the faith that Christianity is, above all things, a religion for the simple, we need only remind ourselves of the distinction between religious experience and theological definition. The simplest can fall under the spell of our Saviour, and can know that His influence is of more worth than all in the world beside. The simplest can know what Christ is, not only to the soul but to the Church—to that 'redeemed community' through which the knowledge of Christ comes to the individual. The simplest can see

the Finger of God in the events of life and history, and in the midst of a world of sin can bask in the sunshine of God's love. But Christianity nevertheless is unable permanently to dispense with the work of the scientific theologian. The example of those Churches where intellectual darkness has been followed by spiritual decline, leads us to infer that no high level of spiritual experience can ever long be maintained except where its results are garnered by careful intellectual labour in the form of clear and systematic statements. But if—to use Dr. Newman's comparison—we are to write down in scientific form all that we know of God and call it theology, just as we write down all that we know of the earth and call it geology, it is obvious that this must be a task which will require the efforts of the best intellects of many succeeding generations.

Theology has been called the Queen of the Sciences. There are some theologians of whom it might well be said that this phrase, though near to their lips, is far from their hearts. Too commonly the name is used as a mere honorific title: and Theology is called the Queen of the Sciences in the same sort of sense in which Brighton is called the Queen of Watering-places. In their proper meaning the words make a very high claim indeed.[1] And on this claim the theologian ought strenuously to insist—not in the sense of desiring to limit freedom of thought and research in each separate field, but rather in the sense that knowledge must aim at becoming a systematic whole. The work of systematizing is the special work of the philosopher. In this aspect of the matter it makes no great difference whether we call

[1] Cf. *Summa Theol.* Pars. i. Qu. i. Art v., Conclusio.

the central science Theology or Metaphysic. But for those who believe in God, God must stand at the centre: and therefore it is strange that any thinker should rest contented with a doctrine of God which does not seek in the end to become also a theory of the Universe. In these matters the only safe course is the bold one: and till theology dares in some sense to claim its old position and to emancipate itself from the tyranny of the specialist, must it not fail to afford to religion the support which religion needs in an age of widespread doubt?

In truth we have no more right to leave to the Fathers of the early Church a monopoly of hard thinking, than to leave to the Martyrs a monopoly of heroic suffering. Those whose task it is to commend Christ and His Gospel to the modern world must lack neither intellectual industry nor intellectual courage.

## CHAPTER IV

## MORALITY

THE main conclusion, however, to which the preceding chapters have brought us is simple and definite. Christianity depends—we have seen—upon the appeal to conscience. In taking his first step, the Christian apologist must rely solely on the moral consciousness of his hearer.

And thus it becomes a matter of primary importance to inquire how far this method of apology will carry us. How many of the beliefs of religion rest on a purely moral foundation? And—first—how far is the testimony of moral consciousness itself worthy of our trust?

There are those who assert that all morality in general is an illusion, an instinct 'useful to the species', but revealing no absolute truth. What other conclusion—asks the sceptic—can we draw from the variety and inconsistency of the moral judgments of mankind? The story of Darius, who startled his Greek subjects with the proposal that they should eat the bodies of their deceased parents after the manner of the Calatian Indians, and evoked an equal horror in the Indians by suggesting that they should burn their parents after the manner of the Greeks, is told by Herodotus in order to point the

moral that 'custom is king of all men.'[1] Many similar divergences of moral view are collected by Locke in the famous chapter[2] in which he maintains that men possess no 'innate practical principles.' The Mengrelians 'a people professing Christianity' bury their children alive without scruple. The Caribbees make their children fat on purpose to kill and eat them. The virtues whereby the Tououpinamboes believed they merited Paradise were Revenge and eating abundance of their enemies.

Now the criticism of sceptical theories of morality is for many reasons an interesting subject: and it is quite worth while to point out that though the sceptics have done good work in correcting certain hasty conclusions, they have at the same time been guilty of a good deal both of exaggeration and irrelevance. Even an extreme case, such as the experiment of Darius, bears witness to a fundamental agreement. The principle that one must honour one's dead relations is accepted on all sides: it is only on the special issue whether the honour is to be shown by burning them, eating them or burying them, that the divergence occurs: and this, after all, is a minor matter. Again, it must be remembered that errors in moral judgment no more prove that our moral faculties are ultimately untrustworthy than arithmetical blunders prove that we have no trustworthy faculties for discovering mathematical truth.

Yet for our present purpose this merely negative type of argument is insufficient. The main concern of the religious teacher is to produce positive conviction: and nothing is really needed for the support of moral beliefs, when these are assailed by sceptical theories, except to

[1] Herod. iii. 38.

[2] *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. I. ch. iii.

make men attend honestly to the processes of their own thought.

In this work, the most valuable of all assistance will be found in the moral writings of Kant. Though the sublimity of the Kantian morality is generally recognized, the complaint is often made that his style is too difficult and technical for the purposes of popular teaching. The truth is, however, that those parts of his moral treatises which are clearest and least controversial, are just those which possess the highest practical and religious value. At the worst, Kant is not a more difficult writer than St. Paul. He is, moreover, admirably adapted, by the gravity and dignity of his thought, to a method of popular treatment not dissimilar to that in which Scripture is expounded in the pulpit.

The place of Kant in Christian apologetics will best be shown by making, first, a statement of the least questionable parts of his teaching, accompanied by such incidental comments and criticisms as are germane to the present subject: and, secondly, by inquiring whether for all those who have really understood him,—even if in very large measure they dissent from his views—he has not made it for ever impossible to relapse into the suspicion that morality is an illusion, an evolutionary accident and nothing more. For our present purpose it is more important, perhaps, to reflect on the Kantian doctrines and phrases, one by one, than to gain a connected view of his system.

Kant's moral teaching begins[1] with the assertion of

[1] For many readers there can be nothing new in Chapters IV

principles which popular thought, when it has grasped their meaning, will at once admit. There is nothing,—he maintains,—in the world nor outside it, which can be regarded as unconditionally good except a Good Will only.[1] Talents, courage, riches, health, are in many aspects worthy objects of desire,[2] but they are not good unconditionally, since they may all become evil if the will which makes use of them is a bad one: and thus a reasonable and impartial spectator can find no satisfaction in contemplating the uninterrupted prosperity of a being wholly destitute of Good Will.[3] Even self control, which appears to make part of our inner worth, and was extolled unconditionally by the ancients,[4] is far from deserving to be called good without qualification. The coolness of a rascal (*Bösewicht*) makes him not only the more dangerous, but also the more intrinsically odious. Thus, while all other good things depend for their goodness on subordination to a Good Will, the Good Will is good quite independently of anything else, and for its own sake alone.

Kant, of course, is not speaking of those shadowy 'good intentions' with which, according to the proverb, Hell is paved. He is speaking 'not of a mere wish', but of the will which, so far as lies in its power, summons all the necessary means to the end at which it is aiming.[5] It is often said, with perfect truth, that some of the worst things in the world are done by well-meaning persons: and, moreover, that these persons deserve the severest

and V, except so far as they bear indirectly upon the question of the usefulness of the Kantian ethics for the purposes of the Bible-class and the Pulpit.

[1] *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, p. 393. The references are to the German paging.

[2] P. 393. [3] P. 393. [4] P. 394. [5] P. 394.

blame if they confide in the mere excellence of their intentions without making any serious attempt to gauge the probable effects of their actions. This common type of mental indolence would be clearly recognized by Kant as betraying a defect of Good Will. But wherever the Good Will is serious, there its mere failure—due to no fault of its own—to carry out its purpose, cannot detract in any degree from the respect which is felt for it.

We all distinguish, in judging of human actions, between the actions that are due to pure motives and those that spring from motives either base or 'mixed'. There has been, in consequence, a very general revolt against any use of language which has seemed to found the claims of religion on a mere calculation of profit and loss. The fact is that the value of the best result is felt to be impaired if it was wrought from motives of self-interest; while, on the other hand, the value of an act which proceeds from genuinely good motives, is in no way impaired by its ill-success,—a conception of morality which may very well be summed up in the Kantian doctrine that we value Good Will for itself and not for its effects: that though Good Will is not the only good or the whole good, it is still the highest good, and is also that upon which the goodness of all other things depends.[1]

The assertion, however, that the Good Will possesses unconditional worth apart from any good results to which it may lead, is—as Kant confesses—a somewhat startling proposition. Such language begets the suspicion that it is based upon some highflown fancy (*bloss hochfliegende Phantasterei*).[2] It is in order to remove this suspicion that Kant is led to examine the notion of 'Duty'.

[1] P. 394, 399. [2] P. 394.

And here Kant makes not merely the obvious contrast between acting from duty and acting from motives of self-interest : he contrasts duty with ' inclination ', in the sense in which even benevolent inclinations are included.[1] Love of our neighbour, regarded as a sentiment, is not within our control and cannot be enjoined upon us. When, therefore, Scripture bids us love our neighbour as ourselves, this command, says Kant, is to be understood as relating not to feeling but to action, to love which is not ' pathological ' but ' practical.' [2] He compares those who are so sympathetically constituted that, without any motives of vanity or self-interest, they take delight in spreading joy around them, with the person whose feeling for the joys of others has been deadened by his own sorrows, who yet rouses himself out of his stupor and does from pure duty the benevolent action from which he is too sorrowful to reap any sympathetic pleasure. The action of the former has much real loveliness,[3] yet it is the action of the latter alone that has in the strict sense ' moral worth '. The one is done in accordance with duty (*pflichtmässig*) ; the other for duty's sake (*aus Pflicht*).

At first sight, perhaps, this teaching may seem to run counter to many accepted notions. In appearance it conflicts with our preference for an act of spontaneous unreflective kindness over that which is laboriously framed by regard to moral laws.

Our hesitation in accepting the Kantian view arises partly, no doubt, from certain associations which the word ' duty ' carries with it in English.[4] But that the objection is not entirely a question of words, is shown

[1] P. 399. [2] P. 399. [3] P. 398.

[4] In English ' principle', rather than ' duty ' is sometimes the better word to use.

in the well known epigram of Schiller.[1] Would my acts of kindness to my friends—he asks in effect—become of greater moral worth if I could succeed in extinguishing all my friendly feelings towards them? Obviously we must answer this question in the negative. Even though we should be sorry to think of our benefactor as one who merely 'goes by his feelings', we still prefer that the friendly feelings should exist. The solution of this difficulty however is really simple.[2] What we want chiefly to know of a man is whether he has enough 'high principle' to enable him to act rightly when his emotions fail him as guides to conduct. Even the overflowing charity of a St. Francis would not receive our unqualified praise, if it were not that we are absolutely convinced that high principle was its basis. If we suspected that the charity of St. Francis, like the zeal of Peter the Hermit, was dependent on mere effervescence of emotion, our estimate of St. Francis would be very different from what it is. The man dependent on emotion is not merely less worthy

[1] Gewissensskrupel
Gerne dien' ich den Freunden, doch thu' ich es leider mit Neigung
Und so wurmt es mir oft, dass ich nicht tugendhaft bin.
Entscheidung
Daist kein anderer Rat, du musst suchen, sie zu verachten
Und mit Abscheu alsdann thun, wie die Pflicht dir gebeut.

[2] The criticism of Schiller is answered in advance in what Kant says on the subject of a 'Holy Will', such a Will as we attribute to God. A Will 'whose maxims necessarily agree with the laws of freedom' (autonomy) is absolutely good. God (*ein heiliges Wesen*) is not to be considered as under any obligation, and our dignity (*Erhabenheit*) depends not on our *subjection* to the Moral Law but rather on the fact that the rational will is *self*-legislative (430–440). Thus Kant does not treat the goodness of a Good Will as wholly dependent on the obstacles which it overcomes. It is supremely good in God, in Whom it is conceived as free from all obstacles.

of trust; he is also less worthy of respect. And thus the absence of amiable emotion and even the presence of unamiable emotion—as tending to exhibit and develop the high principle which overcomes it—may acquire a positive moral value. If, then, we fancy that we are here in disagreement with Kant, this probably arises from a misunderstanding of his position. For our commonest moral judgments are always in essential agreement with his view. High principle is thought worthy of respect even when associated with the coldest feelings, whereas warm feelings are comparatively worthless in a character devoid of principle.

## CHAPTER V

## THE 'IMPERATIVE' OF DUTY

KEEPING in mind these contrasts between Duty and Interest and Duty and Sentiment, we may now pass to the elements in Kant's teaching which are more distinctive. These also, as he holds, are in essential agreement with popular morality, and are its legitimate development.

Among motives of action—he maintains—it is Duty alone in contrast with all appetites and inclinations, which is an object of 'reverence'. He defines Duty as the 'necessity of an action from reverence for the Moral Law'. Our appetites may be approved, but not revered: 'for inclination, my own or another's, I can feel no reverence'.[1] Duty, it has been well said, commands itself: pleasure recommends itself. It is the command alone, then, which enforces respect. 'The awe of duty has nothing in common with the enjoyment of life.'[2]

Again, Kant contrasts Happiness which is an 'Ideal of the imagination' (*Einbildungskraft*)[3] with Duty which is an

[1] *Grundlegung*, p. 400.

[2] See *Critik der Practischen Vernunft. Sechste Auflage*, p. 129, chap. iii.

[3] *Grundlegung*, p. 418.

ideal of the reason. Reason—he teaches—is given, not to secure our happiness, but rather to make possible that kind of conduct which alone makes us worthy to be happy.[1] If reason had been intended by Nature as a mere means to happiness, then Nature, he argues, has chosen her means badly. Those whose aim is personal happiness often find that reason is rather an embarrassment in this pursuit than a help; and it seems obvious that our happiness might have been far more safely provided for us by the aid of an implanted instinct.[2] Thus the consideration of our nature suggests that we are intended for some worthier end. And even if we utterly refuse to recognize in Nature any evidence of Purpose, and therefore reject the assumption that natural means are well chosen, the argument still retains its value. It draws attention to the wide distinction between Duty and Happiness in their character as motives. Reason in delivering itself of this absolutely universal Law of Duty demands an obedience which is disinterested. It offers no enticement, and promises no reward; it uses moreover, no threat; but the mere thought of Duty extorts reverence even if not always obedience, simply by holding up its naked law in the soul.[3] And if considerations of happiness—'empirical' motives[4]—are allowed to operate on our conduct, the value of our performance of duty is positively impaired.

[1] On the relation of this statement to the medieval doctrine of 'Merit', see below, pp. 75, 105, 122.

[2] P. 395.

[3] *Critik der Practischen Vernunft. Sechste Auflage*, p. 125. See Semple's translation (T. and T. Clark, 1871) p. 127, and cf. note below.

[4] *Grundlegung*, pp. 411, 426.

Again, the Moral Law is represented as a 'command' or 'imperative', and as the only imperative which can be 'categorical'—that is 'unconditional'.[1] Rules of skill and maxims of prudence are likewise imperatives, but conditional. 'If you wish to be beloved, do not make vexatious demands upon your friends.' 'If you wish for a long life, do not neglect to take exercise.' All such rules are conditional, since—thus conceived—they have weight with us so long only as we set before ourselves these particular objects of desire. 'Act on all occasions like a man of honour' is, on the other hand, an unconditional command. From such commands we cannot detach ourselves (*los sein*).[2] Even in our violation of the law, the law asserts itself: it takes its revenge in the form of self-accusation—in humbling our self-esteem. And it is just this consciousness that Duty is a command from whose authority we cannot escape, which gives Duty its distinctive character and meaning.

Thus it is that obedience to the Moral Law produces a satisfaction different from all others in kind. It is this obedience only which entitles me to the respect of other men, or to my own self-respect; it is this alone which gives inward peace. In the case of the man—says Kant—whose conscience sustains him in the extremest miseries, because it tells him that he declined to avoid these miseries by bartering his duty, this consolation is not happiness—it is nothing like happiness,—and no one would wish to be so situated, nor for a life in such conjunctures. But so long as man lives, he cannot endure to be in his own eyes unworthy of life. This inward peace is an effect of reverence for something quite different from life, in comparison

[1] P. 432, &c. [2] P. 420.

and contrast with which, life with all its amenities has no value.[1]

Again, Kant insists that morality is essentially independent of examples. Examples serve as an encouragement: they show the practicability (*Thunlichkeit*) of that which the law enjoins: they exhibit the law in clear form before our eyes;[2] but it is not upon these that the law itself is founded. 'Even the Holy One of the Gospels must first be compared with our ideal of moral perfection before we can recognize Him for what He is.'[3] Such moral teaching is therefore peculiarly proof against the scepticism which rests on cynical doubts of human goodness.

And why is morality thus independent of examples? Because our reason is 'self-legislative'[4] and produces the Moral Law spontaneously by its own act. If its moral judgments were forced upon it from outside—if they were due to the pressure of passions or other external causes—reason would not, as it does, regard its judgments as its own.[5] The Moral Law is a law for every rational being as such.[6] Man, as subject to the legislation of his reason only, and not a slave to physical motives, is free. 'A free will and a will subject to Moral Laws is one and the same thing.'[7] Such freedom is, in Kant's phrase, 'Autonomy'. Man, as a rational being beset with passions, stands to the Moral Law at once as its author and its subject.[8]

[1] Semple's translation—which is too often a mere paraphrase—seems here to express with great eloquence the very essence of the Kantian thought.

[2] P. 409. [3] P. 408.
[4] P. 440. [5] P. 448. [6] P. 447.
[7] P. 447. [8] P. 440.

Again, Kant argues that since morality takes no account of consequences, but bids us do our duty, come what may,—since we are thus deprived of the power to base moral obedience upon any material motives—we are therefore left with no other ground for morality but the pure 'form' of the Moral Law itself.[1] This pure 'form' he expresses in the phrase, 'So act that thou canst will that thy maxim should be regarded as law universal.'[2] This rule—he maintains—can be, and is, used by the simplest understanding; and we shall find, that in our transgressions we never, as a fact, will that our evil maxims shall be regarded as law universal. We merely allow an occasional exception in our own favour: abasing the absolute 'universality' of the Moral Law,[3] into a mere 'generality' which is to hold good always except just this once.

[1] Pp. 400, 402, 426, 427, 436.
[2] Pp. 402, 421, &c.
[3] P. 424.

## CHAPTER VI

## GUILT

IF we now ask how far Kant has strengthened the case of the preacher who seeks to produce 'conviction of sin', the answer is clear. He has done this in the only way [1] in which it can be done at all—namely, by describing moral consciousness in a manner which may be seen to be correct by those who possess it. False moral philosophy arises for the most part from simple failure to recognize the character of the principles which we ourselves are employing daily.

As a measure of the debt owed to Kant by the modern world, we might cite many passages of pre-Kantian literature. Take, as an example, Mosheim's criticism of Lord Shaftesbury. 'He has perniciously endeavoured' says the historian[2] 'to destroy the influence and efficiency of some of the motives that are proposed in the Holy Scripture to render men virtuous, by representing these motives as mercenary, and even turning them into ridicule.' 'He substitutes in their place the intrinsic excellence and beauty of virtue, as the great source of moral obligation, and the true incentive to virtuous deeds. But however alluring this sublime scheme of morals may

[1] Cf. Chap. ii.

[2] Vol. iii. (Cent. xvii. Sec. i. xxii).

appear to certain minds of a refined, elegant and ingenuous turn, it is certainly little adapted to the taste, the comprehension and the character of the multitude. Take away from the lower orders of mankind the prospect of reward and punishment that leads them to virtue and obedience by the powerful suggestions of hope and fear, and the great supports of virtue, and the most effectual motives to the pursuit of it, will then be removed with respect to them.'

To Mosheim, therefore, the choice of moral motives appears to lie beween two only—self-interest and exalted sentiment. The latter, he thinks, may serve well enough for philosophic noblemen, but the former alone can be effective with the vulgar. And thus he gives a superficial air of commonsense and hard-headed wisdom to a judgment which will immediately be perceived to be false by any one who knows the 'lower orders of mankind' by personal acquaintance. Kant has taught the world once for all to distinguish a third type of motive, different both from sentiment and self-interest, and has enabled us to recognize that this highest kind of motive is often present in the most simple and unlearned persons.

In the same way Kant clears up the common confusion between morality and 'appetite'.[1] As Touchstone in *As you like it*[2] compares the love-story of Rosalind with the passions of the cat; so the moral sceptic compares morality to the child's fear of the dark. Both of these

[1] Two distinct positions may be maintained: (*a*) 'that morality is only a form of appetite, e.g. a kind of fear'; (*b*) 'that though morality and appetite are distinct, the evolutionary *origin* of morality deprives it of authority.'

[2] Act iii.

latter—he argues—have continued to exist, because both have been useful to the race. The comparison is not without its value. Yet, after all, as surely as the feelings of Rosalind differ from the feelings of the animal (for if they were really identical where would be the amusement in comparing them ?), so also morality differs from childish fear and from every other selfish 'appetite' in our nature : and it is not on its history but on its character—not on whence it came but on what it is—that the authority of the Moral Law depends.

Thus at all points the Kantian lesson is essentially the same. His presentation of morality as 'rational', not on the ground that it conduces to self-interest, but on the opposite ground that it is founded on principles superior to all private considerations, has served to bring into clearer light the true character[1] not only of morality but of reason. To refute the paradox that morality is an illusion we need only appeal to the personal convictions of the very man who asserts it. Is there no law—we may ask him—whose absolute authority you yourself own ? Could you betray a friend without compunction ? Do you regard this feeling of compunction as merely an in-

[1] It is true that his *manner* of distinguishing the moral motive from all others is associated with the weakest part of his system. The theory that we cannot know things 'as they are in themselves, but only as they appear to us,' is a common piece of popular metaphysic. This common view is developed by Kant in systematic form. He teaches that the 'self' which I know in experience as living in time, and acted upon by material motives, is not my true self. This true 'self' is a mysterious entity which belongs to a 'supersensible' world ; it is a being of which I can know nothing but that its law conforms to principles of pure reason. *Grundlegung*, 457, 458.

stinct useful in the evolution of your race, or do you regard it as a sentiment in itself correct—so that the act of treachery is in truth as base as the feeling of compunction represents it to be? If you admit—as of course every rational person, whatever it may amuse him to say when he is engaged in an argument, does admit in his heart—that fidelity to one's friends is a principle which we are bound to observe even when it conflicts with all our inclinations and interests, what is this but to allow that Duty is just such an unconditionally binding Imperative as Kant maintains?

'Yet after all,' it may be said, 'this sense of absolute obligation and of consequent guilt is not universally diffused: it cannot therefore be made the sole basis of religious doctrine.'

The 'higher man' of to-day, says Sir Oliver Lodge, 'is not worrying himself about his sins at all.' These words no doubt contain an element of truth. It is true that we do not, as Bunyan did, go home weeping after a sermon. Yet if future ages are led to conclude from such contemporary testimonies that we are a peculiarly light-hearted generation it is not clear that they will be wholly right. Certainly there is in our literature little evidence for this conclusion. Is Sir Oliver Lodge himself, indeed, a conspicuously light-hearted phenomenon? Surely no generation has been so sensitive as ours is to the faults of its social system. If we are less occupied than our fathers in explicit confession of personal misdeeds, still we are much in the habit of confessing, like Daniel,[1] 'the sins of our

[1] Daniel ix. 20.

people', admitting at the same time our own share in the common responsibility.

We are told sometimes that the sense of individual guilt which belonged to Puritanism has been replaced, among 'the higher men of to-day' by a deeper conception. 'The greatest guilt of man' says Schopenhauer quoting Calderon,[1] 'is that he was born.' The resemblance of this doctrine to the Pauline, Augustinian, and Lutheran, teaching that 'works do not justify' has been pointed out by Schopenhauer himself. Yet the difference is even greater than the resemblance. Schopenhauer's conception of guilt, though in a sense severer than St. Paul's, is at the same time less effective as a practical incentive to conduct: and in spite of the fact that Schopenhauer has had great influence on many of our most popular writers, it is still true that in England at least the more practical conception of guilt is almost everywhere dominant.

But we need not confine ourselves to one country or one circle of society. The same general sense of right and wrong—or the capacity for it—may be found under the most varied social conditions. The late Sir Alfred Lyall used to tell the story of the murder of a blind man in an Indian bazaar by means of a present of poisoned fruit. The community to which the murderer belonged was inured to crime, and its moral sense was peculiarly obtuse: yet this act aroused its most intense indignation. This is no solitary case. The truth is that, though in low communities it may need a very gross example to stir the faculty of moral condemnation to activity, yet when their moral indignation is once aroused it is based upon

[1] *World as Will and Idea*, p. 328, Vol. i.

ultimate moral principles which are in harmony with our own. We find, when we get deep enough down, the same categorical imperative issuing the same universal command. If one has once perceived that it is wrong to take advantage of a man's infirmity to do him an injury, one has discovered the principle on which all the law and the prophets hang. The denizen of the Indian bazaar differs from Kant in the slowness with which this principle dawns upon his mind, and in his capacity for applying it, but not in his perception of its content.

Let us suppose, however, that we could produce an individual, or a race, destitute of moral conceptions and of the capacity for framing them. Even this evidence would not suffice to prove that we are wrong in seeking to make moral consciousness the basis of our theology. The religious teacher is primarily concerned with the moral consciousness of his immediate hearer, and not with that of the lower types of humanity. The reader who on mature reflection is convinced that he possesses no moral consciousness at all can hardly be invited to pursue the present argument. But no such reader will be found. Sophistical methods of explaining morality away exist in plenty. Against these there lies ready to hand an inexhaustible armoury of weapons in the Dialogues of Plato. It is, however, needless to spend much time in the solution of sophistical puzzles, since very few men, even in their first youth, are seriously deceived by them. Further, unless a man will seriously affirm that he has never done anything of which he is or ought to be ashamed, he must admit that he stands, just as Kant alleges, under a Law which humbles him. Between such an admission and

an effective conviction of sin there is a wide difference. But no candid man can refuse to admit the premises on which the conviction of sin is based.

The main obstacle, in fact, which the Christian teacher has to meet is not sophistry but thoughtlessness. Kant has taken some of our most familiar conceptions—those which are expressed by the words 'good', 'ought', 'guilt', 'Law', 'reverence'—and among them he has established a strict connexion. By defining the thought which is contained in these terms—terms which have a clear and an absolute meaning for normal people, whatever may be the case with certain savage races—Kant has shown our subjection to a law under which those who know it are all bound, and are all guilty.

## CHAPTER VII

## DELIVERANCE FROM GUILT

WE see, then, how the preacher who relies on moral arguments, without any reference to the supernatural, may lead his hearers to conviction of sin. But can he lead them from knowledge of sin to knowledge of justification? He has ground sufficient to establish the Christian doctrine of condemnation; can he establish the Christian doctrine of salvation also?

The sense of sin in its general form is in no way peculiar to Christianity. Indeed it is from the sense that Man and the Universe are out of joint, and that some kind of reconciliation must be attempted between them, that religion seems, for the most part, to arise.[1] The distinction between religions is found in the methods by which this attempt is made, and thus to contrast the Christian method of Salvation with other methods is among the foremost tasks of the apologist.

The two methods which alone can be considered as serious rivals to Christianity, are the method of Asceticism and the method of Good Works. From both Christianity must be sharply distinguished; for though self-abnegation and a virtuous life have a high place in Christianity

[1] This phrase covers the development of early religions as described e.g. in Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

itself, it is essentially different from any system which puts its sole or main trust in either.

Of the ascetic method the noblest representative is Buddhism. On this subject the Western student must always speak with caution. It is inconceivable that any Western scholar can know an Oriental language as thoroughly as the majority of educated Europeans know Latin. And thus the mutual misunderstandings between Roman Catholics and Protestants—where the difficulties of comprehension are comparatively small—should serve as a warning against too implicit confidence in the judgment of Western Orientalists. With regard, however, to the main outline of Eastern beliefs, we may assume that our teachers have not wholly misled us.

Buddhism has in many respects a close resemblance to Christianity. It resembles it in its hostility towards sharp lines of social cleavage, in requiring self-denial, in inculcating charity and meek behaviour towards all mankind, in condemning the method which seeks salvation through external works,[1] and in condemning even the more violent forms of asceticism itself. As in Christianity and in Stoicism, so in Buddhism also, man seeks freedom not by subduing the world to his will, but primarily by changing the attitude of his will toward the world.

[1] *Buddhism*: by T. W. Rhys Davids, p. 110, note. We may compare the error of the modern Buddhist who classes Christianity with the religions which depend on 'works', with that of Tanquerey and other Roman Catholic writers who class Kant with the Stoics. Both errors are instructive. Tanquerey cannot *afford* to understand Kant: just as the Buddhist cannot *afford* to understand Christianity. To understand the higher system is to accept it.

But this superficial resemblance to Christianity masks a deep internal difference. It is the glory of Christianity that the Salvation it offers is universal, excluding neither the morally degraded nor the intellectually weak. 'Therefore it is of faith' says St. Paul 'that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed'.[1] It is the boast of the Gospel that it addresses itself to the common man living under common conditions; that it seeks not to take him out of the world but to keep him from the evil [2]; that it offers immediate reconciliation to the man newly rescued from gross sin; and further that the humblest intelligence is within the scope of its ministrations. A Christian Bishop has recently administered the rite of Confirmation to an idiot, assured that the man understood Repentance and Obedience, and reconciliation thereby with God; and from the time of the Thief on the Cross to our own, Christianity has offered instantaneous pardon to the penitent. Buddhism, on the other hand, seeks gradually to liberate and purify the soul by methods which only few can employ [3]—by slow and gradual ascent through moderate asceticism and intellectual contemplation, the former beyond the reach of all but celibate persons, the latter closed to the man of low mental endowment. 'He that is dead is freed from sin'[4]. On this subject the Christian and the Oriental may hold similar language; but the typically Oriental religions —with greater or less severity—seek a living death, in which all the passions shall be stilled, while Christianity is consistent with the life of the plain man living in the world.

[1] Rom. iv. 16. [2] St. John xvii. 15.
[3] See especially Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, chaps. iv. and v.
[4] Rom. vi. 7.

This difference of method results from a profound difference of conception. It cannot be too often repeated that while the Christian glories in the Cross and practises self-denial with enthusiasm, Christian self-abnegation is conceived essentially as the sacrifice of that which is in itself good. It is compared with the plucking out of the eye to save the whole body.[1] The Oriental, on the other hand, dies to the world, because he takes it to be evil—a world of vanity and illusion.

How then is the ascetic method to be regarded? Can we seriously look upon it as a means by which we ourselves can gain deliverance from guilt? That the life of voluntary poverty is the true vocation of some individuals is a truth more clearly perceived in Christendom at this moment than at any other period since the close of the Middle Ages. Again to 'keep under the body and bring it into subjection' is a duty, not for some only, but for all. In Christendom, however, asceticism holds a place which, though important, is subordinate. The ascetic and contemplative life, as such, can never be accepted by the Christian as equivalent to the Way of Salvation. It is true that upon many Western minds the religions of the East exercise at first contact a powerful attraction, and it is to their ascetic practices that this attraction is due. While the Christian saint professes death to the world, the Eastern ascetic seems to surpass him in the thoroughness of his self-surrender. Yet in most cases this attraction is merely romantic. The European does not in fact become an Oriental ascetic. And if for a time he seeks peace by persuading himself of the worthlessness of the things of sense, this is a phase which passes away

[1] St. Matt. v. 29.

with youth.[1] To suggest that the revolt of the European from asceticism proceeds from worldliness or lack of courage would be palpably unjust. The European races are indeed conspicuous for their power to overcome obstacles. Our refusal of the ascetic method arises not from our inferiority to the Oriental in strength of character, but from our superiority in moral perception. If Christianity declared 'all earthly blessings to be valueless' and pointed exclusively 'to a world-shunning and contemplative life', it would be 'an offence to all energetic, nay, ultimately to all true natures; for such natures are certain that our faculties are given us to be employed, and that the earth is assigned to us to be cultivated and subdued'.[2] We are in fact convinced that eating and drinking, trade, learning, marriage and family life, are not evil but good—that it is God who thus 'fills our hearts with food and gladness'.[3] We have all retained enough at least of the Optimism of Christianity to recognize that a total extinction of sensation, even if it were possible, would be wrong. And thus the European who professes that the Oriental and not the Christian method of salvation is the true one, is seldom serious. Pure asceticism, as St. Paul perceived long ago, is 'of no value against the indulgence of the flesh'.[4] Error can be expelled only by truth: and the maxims of an ultimate

[1] 'The Enchiridion of Epictetus I had ever with me, often as my sole rational companion; and I regret to mention that the nourishment it yielded was trifling.' *Sartor Resartus*, bk. ii. chap. vi. Compare the passages about the *De Imitatione Christi* in the *Mill on the Floss*.

[2] Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, pp. 80–81.

[3] Acts xiv. 17.

[4] Col. ii. 23—(if this is the right rendering of an obscure passage).

asceticism are as false as those of an unrestrained self-indulgence.

Buddhism then,—understood as a religion of asceticism in this sense—cannot be accepted as a serious alternative to Christianity. But if deliverance from guilt is not to be sought by Oriental asceticism, can it be found in the method of 'Good Works'?

The phrase suggests to us at once the Jewish Law. But though it is in Pharisaic Judaism that this method has found its most complete embodiment, it has been by no means confined to the Jew.

The method of 'Good Works' is indeed the obvious and natural method by which justification is sought. It consists in setting before oneself some definite standard of behaviour, and expecting by strict conformity thereto to attain satisfaction and peace of mind. It is a method, however, which inevitably leads either to disappointment or to self-righteousness: to disappointment in the minds of the honest and thoughtful, to self-righteousness in those who are contented with defective self-knowledge and a low and arbitrary standard. The man who has fulfilled all his more obvious duties in business and in family life, will sometimes say upon his deathbed that he knows no reason why he should fear to meet his Judge.[1] Yet will he assert upon these grounds that he has a peace 'which passes all understanding'? It is probable that no such claim has ever been made. Even the sym-

[1] The question 'Are you then one of the ninety and nine just persons mentioned in Scripture who need no repentance?' will sometimes bring men of this type to their senses.

pathetic onlooker who is indignant that the Christian Minister should disturb the dying man's last moments by any hint of doubt, proves by his very indignation that he distinguishes this negatively easy conscience from the assured peace of the Christian. That Christian assurance is not easily disturbed is recognized even by those who regard it as an illusion. For the confidence, on the other hand, which is based on one's own blameless past, no one at heart feels much respect. Good humour and commercial honesty are high virtues: but they do not constitute the whole duty of man.

Compared with the Pharisaism of common life, the Pharisaism of the Pharisee stands high in the moral scale. Pharisaic Judaism—of which the essence is an ordering of conduct by detailed regulations—was, at least, a serious and persistent effort after righteous living. If it has not the romantic charm of the systems of the Stoic and the Buddhist, it has the solid merit of a greater effectiveness. Yet the writings of St. Paul show plainly that its success was but partial. And thus the most conspicuous of those who have given the system a fair trial becomes the classic example of its ultimate failure.

We have, moreover, learned St. Paul's lesson to very little purpose if we think that the failure of the legal method depended upon the peculiar contents of the Law of Moses. Just as there were those who found in the Law something very like a Gospel,[1] so there are always those who living under the Gospel use it as a Law. 'There are two methods of seeking holiness' said a modern preacher, 'the inward and the outward. May not the latter be as

[1] Mic. vi. 8; 2 Chron. vi. 14–42; Jer. xxxi. 31–34.

effective as the former? Could not a man become saintly by acting at all points like a saint?' To that question St. Paul has given once for all the negative answer.[1] Through a great part of the Epistle to the Romans the same word is applied indifferently to the Law of Moses and the true Law of God.[2] The difference between the two did not here need to be insisted on since it was irrelevant to the argument. The legal method must fail, whether our conception of the contents of the Law be Judaic or Christian, for the simple reason that in either case complete obedience is beyond human attainment. The Covenant of Works may be faultless, as regards its contents; its one unalterable defect is that no one can fulfil it.

[1] Behind the preacher's question there may have lain a true meaning, unfortunately as the sentiment is expressed. Cf. what is said about the Keswick School below.

[2] Rom. chap. ii. to viii.

## CHAPTER VIII

## CHRISTIANITY

WHAT then is the method which St. Paul proposes to substitute? Against the method of 'works' he sets the method of 'faith'—spoken of in many contexts as faith 'in Christ', and sometimes also in special relation to Christ's 'blood'.

In regard to the doctrine of 'atonement by blood' only one remark is needed here.[1] Though the doctrine has received elaborate development at the hands of theologians medieval and modern, especially in the Churches of the Reformation, the tendency at the present moment is in a contrary direction. St. Paul's references to the subject have led some writers to infer that his mind moved so entirely among antique and barbaric conceptions that he cannot be regarded by the modern world as a serious ethical teacher at all. And even the defenders of the doctrine of the Atonement themselves have preferred in recent times to dwell chiefly upon Christ's general obedience, and upon His position as the Representative of our race, leaving aside so far as possible all reference to sacrificial blood. In Dr. Macleod Campbell's chapter[2] on the Death of Christ the word 'blood' occurs only

[1] See chap. xviii.

[2] *The Nature of the Atonement*, chap xiii. p. 312. Cf. p. 292 (3rd edition, 1869).

once, and then in a quotation. Much the same general criticism is applicable to Dr. Moberly.

Now to state a self-consistent theory of the relation of the blood of Christ to the sins of man is certainly not easy. Yet it should always be remembered how much of the attractiveness of Christian preaching has been due to this very doctrine of the cleansing stream—the paradox of the robes made white in blood.[1] A philosophy based upon experience must not despise the testimony of the emotions. 'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?' asks Macbeth. It is surely a significant fact that to many a mind, in modern no less than in ancient times, the statement that what water is thus unable to accomplish may be accomplished by the blood of Christ, conveys both a distinct meaning and an emotional satisfaction: and that few passages of Scripture are more often quoted than those which speak of Christ in sacrificial language. We may be permitted to surmise, then, that if Dr. Moberly like Macbeth had committed a murder, or if the youth of Dr. Macleod Campbell had been stained with the offences of Don Juan, these two able writers might have perceived that even the most unlettered exponents of this doctrine may sometimes have gone nearer to the heart of the matter than they.

To this subject we must return below. For the present we are concerned primarily, not with the work of Christ, but with the mental attitude of the Christian. When this mental attitude is spoken of as 'faith', in what sense is this term being employed?

This question touches the most important point in

[1] Rev. vii. 14.

Pauline interpretation; and in answering it it is well to bear in mind that we stand to-day at a critical period in Pauline study. The tacit assumption that St. Paul's terminology is identical with that of the Reformers or the Greek Fathers, or that his views are precisely those of the modern High or Low Churchman, is not now so commonly made as formerly. But there is a danger lest this error may be replaced by the more scholarly but hardly more reasonable assumption that he was the mere child of his time. That much light is being, and will be, thrown on the New Testament writers by a study of their hitherto unregarded contemporaries is certain. Yet the greatest men are always those who are their own best commentators. Such men can be understood fully only by the student who will give independent thought to the subject of which they treat. Is St. Paul then a mere spinner of Rabbinical cobwebs, or is he a genuine thinker dealing with the eternal facts of the spiritual life? If we may assume the latter view—and those who have tried by St. Paul's aid to spell out the problems of their own inner life will not doubt it—it will not be impossible to arrive at some definite conclusions as to his meaning.

In the first place it will become clear that Pauline faith is not a form of intellectual assent, but an act of will. 'Belief' in the Gospel and 'obedience' to the Gospel are used by him as interchangeable terms. The believer has 'yielded himself as a servant to obey' God's law.[1] If by 'justification through faith' St. Paul had intended 'justification through orthodoxy,' he

[1] 2 Thess. i. 8; Rom. vi. 12–22; Rom. ii. 8; cf. 1 Pet. iii. 1; iv. 17; Heb. v. 9.

would in fact be teaching that we are justified by the kind of faith which the Epistle of James attributes to the devils.[1] To teach that apart from good works men can be justified by such faith as this—to teach that so long as a man holds correct opinions it makes no matter what he does—is to teach that very Antinomianism against which St. Paul consistently protests.[2] The Pauline faith is described as 'working by love';[3] that is, it is such that though distinct from good works it must inevitably lead to them. There is only one mental state—namely an act of will—to which this description is applicable. No mere act of apprehension and no mere feeling leads inevitably to good works. Our conduct is not under the immediate control either of our emotions or of our beliefs: it is under the immediate control of our will only. We can thus give no self-consistent interpretation to the Pauline teaching except on the supposition that the 'justifying faith' of which he speaks is equivalent in essence to that which in the language of Kant is called the 'Good Will', namely the general determination of ourselves in conduct to the choice of all that is good as such.

The use of 'faith' as equivalent to an act of will was, after all, no novelty. It was already in St. Paul's time a theological commonplace [4] to single out from the Old Testament certain examples which consisted primarily in such a trust in God as implied practical self-surrender

[1] St. James, ii. 19.

[2] Antinomianism has been popularly expressed in the couplet—

'Tis no matter what you do
If your heart be only true.

[3] Gal. v. 6.

[4] Heb. xi.; St. James ii. 21–25.

to His will—the 'faith' of Rahab, the 'faith' of Moses, the 'faith' of Abraham. St. Paul—it is to be remembered—found on his Conversion a religious system already in existence. He found men living in a state of inward peace, assurance and joy, which he himself had failed to find in the Law. Christianity had indeed effected a marked simplification of religion. It had set before men as the 'one thing needful' [1] the spirit of discipleship. The following of Christ had become to the disciples not only the centre, but the whole, of religion. And it had become plain since the Crucifixion that this following of Christ was in essence not a literal but a moral following, not an actual attendance on the Master but a submission to His call. 'Faith' is contrasted in Scripture not with 'reason' but with 'sight'.[2] The disciples endured as seeing Him Who is invisible.[3] And the attitude of the Christian who found peace in submission to a law, the full contents of which are necessarily beyond his knowledge, was strictly analogous to the obedience of Abraham who goes forth in reliance on the divine command 'not knowing whither he went'. The 'one thing needful' is indeed variously described. In relation to the past it is repentance: in relation to God's Law it is the teachable spirit: in relation to mankind it is the faith which worketh by love. But, however described, it is one and the same frame of mind, and its one indispensable element is rightness of will. Since, therefore, St. Paul

[1] Much of the failure to recognize the distinctive character of the Christian Religion is due to the habit of taking as its central principle its inculcation of universal charity—which it shares with Buddhism—instead of that conception of 'spiritual religion' which as we shall see below is peculiar to itself.

[2] 2 Cor. v 7. [3] Heb. xi. 27.

speaks of righteousness by faith as a righteousness 'recently manifested',[1] we are justified in interpreting his meaning by a reference to the circumstances of his time. But even apart from this his own language is sufficiently clear. Faith is described by him as consistent with everything except wilful disobedience: and the command to prove oneself whether one be 'in the faith'[2] refers obviously to a self-examination which turns, not on belief, but on conduct.

And, in truth, the method of 'faith' thus interpreted is the method not of St. Paul only but of Christianity in general. The sense that the 'one thing needful' is the will right with God is the universal and peculiar possession of Christians. It is manifested by Christians in practice even in schools of thought where its theoretical expression has been weak and halting; and it is never manifested fully except in Christianity alone. The prophet Micah, indeed, divined that the Lord required nothing but that man should 'do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God.'[3] But apart from the all-important fact that Micah entirely failed to establish a religion which should rest on these purely spiritual conditions, his statement is in itself defective. The dictum of Micah would have brought no explicit comfort to the Penitent Thief, since it insists upon justice, the very virtue which the Thief had neglected to practise. In Christianity, on the other hand, the peace which depends on the rightness of the heart with God is always explicitly connected with the knowledge of the imperfection of our actual achievement. To St. Paul the Christian is one

[1] Rom. iii. 21. [2] 2 Cor. xiii. 5. [3] Mic. vi. 8.

who 'worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly'[1]. Similarly, Luther insists that it is not faith and love, but faith alone, which justifies the sinner.[2] And even in types of Christianity which stand at the opposite extreme from that of Luther and St. Paul, there exists the same perpetual sense of the presence of sin. The repeated prayer of the author of the 'Golden Legend' is that the Saints may 'impetre remission'[3] of our sins from God. It is a pure mistake to suppose that Christianity even of the simplest type is ever a mere fairy-tale—the mere Legend of One Who sends His Son in changed form upon earth and arbitrarily offers Heaven to those who shall penetrate this disguise,[4]—and thence to conclude that popular Christianity is concerned with Salvation in no higher sense than that of material happiness in a future existence. The Christian mind in all its varieties is set on Salvation in its deeper significance, and even where language turns mainly upon future glory it is as a symbol of deliverance from moral guilt that future glory is chiefly valued. A future life without deliverance from sin, however happy it might otherwise be conceived to be, would have no attraction for the Christian soul.

Thus it is not enough to say that Christianity is char-

[1] Rom. iv. 5.

[2] With the discussions in Möhler's *Symbolik* § 15 to § 20 cf. Ritschl, *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, § 19.

[3] See e.g. the life of St. Paul the Hermit: the Purification of our Lady: the Chairing of St. Peter.

[4]
So that the few
On whom My grace descends, those who are marked
As vessels to the honour of their God,
May credit this strange sacrifice and save
Their souls alive.

Shelley's '*Queen Mab*', vii.

acterized by the 'inward method' in the spiritual life—the same thing might be said of Buddhism:—it is characterized by the use of an inward method of a special kind. Christianity has worked the supreme revolution because, unlike Buddhism, it has set before men an ideal which contains no element against which the healthy soul revolts. The Christian ideal, even as embodied in the Person of Christ, is rather a sketch than a complete picture. Christ is presented to us in Scripture rather as faultless than as perfect. There are many aspects of human duty—the life of the soldier, the thinker, the scholar, the artist—for which neither His precept nor His example give any explicit guidance. But, so far as it goes, the Christian ideal has a convincing finality which is quite unique. The perfected Buddhist ascetic has destroyed elements in human nature which were worth preserving. The perfected Christian saint, if such a saint could be found, would be fit for immediate entrance upon the life of glory. While, however, Christianity has made the unattainableness of the true ideal plainer than ever before, it has at the same time revealed the possibility of peace of mind through genuine submission to this ideal in will—a submission which may be complete at any moment though the obedience in deed can never in this world be complete at all.

We may see then how the Kantian terminology enables us to define, with a clearness unattained in pre-Kantian days, the frame of mind which is characteristic of Christianity, and also to connect this with the claim of Christianity to be the universal religion. If the 'Good Will'—the whole-hearted surrender of the Will to God's command—is indeed the 'one thing needful' for justification,

then, but not otherwise, justification is open to all mankind. Special capacities—of emotion, belief, or knowledge—are possessed by some men and denied to others. The Good Will alone is within the reach of every rational being. It is true that with St. Paul the surrender of the Will to God had been contemporaneous with the conviction that Christ was raised from the dead. The decision and the belief, thus associated together, were never afterwards severed. And therefore St. Paul has used language which some schools of theology will always quote [1] as evidence that the 'faith' of which he speaks is

[1] See especially Rom. x. 9, 1 Cor. xv. 2. Those who allege these passages in favour of a non-moral interpretation of St. Paul's language may be asked whether they would themselves be willing to accept St. Paul's statements in an absolutely literal manner. His actual words would cover the case of the morally profligate scholar who on arriving at the conclusion that Christ's resurrection was the best attested fact in history should have courage to avow this belief. But the Epistle to the Romans is in form a letter: and the warning of Matthew Arnold against applying to literary works canons of interpretation appropriate to dogmatic treatises only cannot be too often in our minds.

St. Paul's general attitude towards moral and intellectual errors seems sufficiently plain. We may indeed recognize three grades of severity in his condemnation.

His greatest severity is for those who while professing Christianity violate the Moral Law (1 Cor. iv. 19–21; v. 1–5, 9, 11–13; Eph. v. 6; cf. 2 Tim. ii. 18. To hold oneself to be already a saint in glory—if this be the meaning—seems inconsistent with moral sanity. It is clear at any rate that the heresy, whatever it was, was associated with antinomian practices. See *v.* 19 and cf. 1 Tim. i. 20 with 1 Cor. v. 5).

Next in severity is his language towards those who have renounced a higher spiritual method in favour of a lower one. (Gal. iii. 1; Col. ii. 20).

Lightest is his condemnation of error which concerns mere matters of fact, even though this be disbelief in the Resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. xv.).

In the first case he excommunicates: in the second he de-

not an act of will but the acceptance of an historical belief, or perhaps that it is an act compounded of these two heterogeneous elements. Such arguments, however, are for controversial use only. By an honourable inconsistency they are forgotten in dealing with the sinner. No one really desires that the Penitent Thief, pending his instruction in the Apostles' Creed, should be excluded from Paradise. And it is surely clear that if St. Paul had been conversant with modern distinctions—if the broad line between belief and will, the speculative and the practical, had been as evident to him as, since the time of Kant, it is to us—he could on his own principles have had little tolerance for those who would assert that the penitent and obedient spirit is no longer the one thing needful for finding peace with God, but that we must be

nounces: in the third he merely argues. To profess that Christ delivers from sin (xv. 17) and yet to deny that He is risen seems to the Apostle profoundly illogical; but there is no word here of 'delivering the unbeliever to Satan', no suggestion that the Christians should 'put away from among themselves that wicked person', no passionate pleading and rebuke such as marks the Epistle to the Galatians.

That belief in Christ's Resurrection, though associated in St. Paul's own case with 'saving faith', is not considered by him as absolutely identical with it or inseparable from it, may be seen by a consideration of Rom. ix. 32. The Jew is there declared to have failed, not because the Resurrection of Christ was not made known to him, but because of the faultiness of the method by which he sought righteousness. If the veil had not been upon his heart he might have learned from the words of Moses (Rom. x. 6) the method of righteousness through faith which was 'witnessed by the law and the prophets' (iii. 21), though not actually manifested till the veil was done away in Christ. It is Christ as the bringer in of a new Law and a new Covenant, rather than Christ as risen, that is the central theological thought even for the Apostle for whom the bodily resurrection meant so much.

careful and troubled about many things besides, such as the intricacies of evidential theology. The childlike and teachable spirit will lead the scholar to seek out the truth on these subjects as on all others: but since belief in Christ's resurrection can on no hypothesis come to us with immediate evidence, but only as the result of a chain of reasoning, it is impossible that this belief can stand in the same relation to our faith as it did to that of the Apostle, or to any other of the original eye-witnesses.[1]

We arrive then at an answer to the question with which this chapter opened. The method by which the religion of Christ seeks deliverance from guilt is a

[1] It seems worth while to point out that the ambiguity of the word 'faith'—though it has led to confusion—can seldom have led to vital error. Here, indeed, as so often, the vaguer term—the language of 'literature' rather than 'dogma'—is in the end the more expressive. Christianity proclaims salvation through 'will' rather than through 'deed' (cf. Rom. vii. 18); through 'trying' to serve God rather than through 'succeeding' in this service. But the term 'faith' has advantages which suggest that we cannot well find a satisfactory substitute for it. While 'trying' carries with it the association of precarious experiment, 'faith' suggests assured confidence. Again 'will' suggests activity, while 'faith' suggests that passive attitude which is congenial with the language of Kant no less than with that of the New Testament (Rom. ix. 16)—the attitude of submission to a law which even against our will can extort our reverence. To Kant the Moral Imperative, though present to every rational being, is yet a standing miracle, comparable to the starry heavens. For St. Paul, though Salvation is thrown open to 'all the seed', it is yet the gift of God (Eph. ii. 8). And no one who has known the temptations of a time of torpor—when all good impulses except the bare Imperative of Duty have ceased to act—will find such language unintelligible.

method quite its own: and it is not too much to say that it is the one method by which freedom from guilt can reasonably be hoped for. For what are its possible competitors? Oriental Asceticism is a way of condemnation—an 'offence ultimately to all true natures'.[1] The legal method is a way of condemnation also:[2] since no honest man can conceivably hold that he has fulfilled all the Law of God. Christianity, on the other hand, offers the only peace, freedom and self-respect, which is possible to an awakened soul in a world of sin. Granted that to many the cleansing by Christ's blood is an unmeaning phrase: there is yet no one who may not discover, by direct experience and quite apart from all supernatural conceptions, that—with a will attuned to the law which he cannot perfectly fulfil in deed—he may be 'clean' in spite of sin 'through the word which Christ has spoken'.[3]

[1] Harnack, loc. cit.
[2] 'The ministration of death', 2 Cor. iii. 7.
[3] St. John xv. 3.

## CHAPTER IX

## CHRIST

FROM Christianity as a System we now pass to Christ as a Person. How far will the purely moral method of argument which we have hitherto pursued lead us towards a Christian estimate of Jesus?

There are many to whom the transition from Christianity to Christ is so natural as to seem hardly to be a transition at all. We use Christ's name freely in speaking of our own religious states: we speak of Christian salvation, Christian hope, Christian humility, Christian charity, Christian resignation. In these and other phrases the common language of believers has always identified our Religion with its Founder.

But is this identification well grounded? There are those who deny it: who assert that Jesus stands in no such unique relation as this phraseology implies with the religion of the modern Christian. 'What our religious experiences prove is that there is a present power adequate to produce them: they give no one any right to call that power by any historical name. To call it the "Living Christ" is to beg the question: it is to go beyond what the evidence will justify. The Buddhist would have as much right to call it the "Living Buddha".

The best name for it is doubtless the "Living God"'.[1]

This objection has in part been already met. We have seen why St. Paul could not have spoken—in the sense here suggested—of the 'Living Moses'. The modern Christian has the same reason for refusing to speak of the 'Living Buddha', and—in general—for singling out the influence of Christ from among all the other holy and noble influences which the world has known. Christ—it is true—is not unique in every sense. He is not the only spiritual teacher of mankind. Nor is He the only teacher in whose light men have seen light through succeeding generations. Gautama, Socrates, Francis of Assisi may all in various ways be aptly compared to Him. But He is unique in being just what He was, and in teaching just what He taught. And it is precisely by being what He was and not another, that He has been the author of the gifts that are distinctively Christian. When we are speaking, not of achievement, but of rightness of mood and temper, the difference between absolute rightness and anything less than this is indeed infinite. It is quite conceivable then that Christ is not merely unique but supreme—that the supremacy which belongs to His religion belongs also to His Person. But is this so in truth? We have seen in the preceding chapter that the Gospel has brought a deliverance from guilt such as other systems have failed to achieve; and thus that we are not going beyond what experience warrants if we say that we have found Salvation through Christianity. But are we entitled to say, on mere grounds of experience alone, that Salvation is to be found through Christ?

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, vol. iv. no. 4, July 1906, p. 851. *Why not face the facts? An appeal to Protestants.* Rev. K. C. Anderson, D.D.

This question may be asked in two senses. We may conceivably regard the Christ of the Gospels as an Ideal Figure and nothing more. Even so we can hardly deny that the moral teaching of the Gospels is inextricably intertwined with its Personal Embodiment: even so it will still in a sense be Christ, and not merely Christianity, which is the force which draws men upward. If on the other hand we believe ourselves to know Jesus as a Person of history,—a Power of Salvation manifested in the flesh—we shall have arrived at a position far nearer to that of traditional theology. Has the world then been saved by the historic Jesus? Has the world been saved by the Ideal Christ? Provided that we keep these two questions clearly apart in our minds, there is no harm in discussing them together.

In dealing with both these questions we must be careful to avoid the familiar assumptions of orthodoxy. We must not assume that the Evangelists were supernaturally protected from error, or that, Christ being divine, His actions must be judged by a special standard.[1] Whatever result we may arrive at as a conclusion, it will be arguing in a circle to introduce such assumptions among our premises.

It will be wise, moreover, to keep constantly in view opinions which stand at the extreme of opposition to those usually held by Christians. A brilliant writer has declared himself weary of hearing all 'perfections ascribed to a semi-mythical Syrian'. Others have spoken as if

[1] See *One Volume Bible Commentary* (Macmillan and Co). p. 655. The reply made here to Professor Huxley's argument would serve to justify, not only the destruction of property, but murder or theft.

the Gospels contained nothing but the commonplaces of morality with a garniture of fabulous incident. Such sentiments ought not greatly to surprise us. It should be remembered that the whole tendency of modern training is to make men suspicious of miraculous stories in whatever context they may occur. The *onus probandi* is upon the Christian.

We must give special attention too, at the present moment, to what is called the 'eschatological theory'. As expounded by Dr. Schweitzer,[1] it cannot be classed among the views which seek to lessen the Figure of the Saviour. In the popularized form, however, in which it has had vogue in this country, little except the negations have been retained. Thus we are told that what Jesus really was must always remain in large measure unknown: and that so far as we know Him He belongs to a world of thought so different from ours that to enter into His mind is impossible. The surest fact about Him—it is said—is that He proclaimed the speedy Advent of the end, and His own appearance, as the Son of Man predicted by Daniel, upon the clouds of heaven: and, moreover,—since all His teaching is subordinate to this hope—His directions for conduct become a mere "Interimsethik", a purely provisional morality fitted to fill the short gap between His earthly preaching and His miraculous return.

[1] The translation into English of Dr. Schweitzer's great Prose-Epic—under the title of the 'Quest of the Historical Jesus'—is an important event. Yet, so far as the character of our Lord is concerned, we may gain more light from an older work written in our own tongue. The texts which revealed the 'secret of Jesus' to the author of *Literature and Dogma*, are still in the Bible, even though scholars more learned than he have failed to understand their significance.

What positive evidence have we to oppose to these denials? Let us turn to the Synoptic Gospels.[1] The Master's teaching as there described is conditioned, no doubt, by the popular notions of His day. It is moulded by the Messianic expectation. But was He Himself at the same intellectual standpoint as His contemporaries, or did He merely use current notions for His own higher purposes?

And—first of all—what sort of picture of His character and teaching do these Gospels convey? A clear conception of this picture, of its definiteness, its unity, and its uniqueness, is the first step towards a just estimate of its historic value.

Now to dissect so sacred a thing as our impression of the teaching and character of Jesus can never be a wholly pleasant task, however reverent be the spirit in which it is undertaken. Yet the effort is worth making: for even a brief study of the subject is enough to show that there are facts within the reach of every Bible-reader which form a sufficient basis for the conclusions which most concern practical Christianity. In all the direct sources of the Evangelical narrative which modern criticism asks us to distinguish—in St. Mark, in the "non-Marcan document", in the special sections peculiar to the authors of the First and Third Gospels—there is a type of teaching which cannot in the nature of the case be purely subordinate to the hope of a Messianic Reign, unless this hope is interpreted in a highly spiritual sense. Modern critics have been accused sometimes of making

[1] The Gospel of St. John has no obvious bearing on the present argument. It may be doubted whether modern criticism has yet found the key to the intricate problems which that Gospel presents.

the arbitrary assumption that Jesus is to be interpreted as if He were a modern Liberal and Protestant. These phrases would not be applied to Him without qualification by any man of reverent mind. Yet none the less the Liberal Protestant may fairly claim that all that he values most in his religion has been directly learned from the express teaching of Jesus in the Gospels. The words of Jesus, as the Evangelists report them, are no mere 'striking moral aphorisms'—comparable to the dicta of the Wise Men of Greece or to the Proverbs of Solomon. Many of His sayings, even if taken singly, may justly be described to-day—in spite of the distance which separates His time from ours—as the last word of spiritual wisdom on the subjects of which they treat. His sayings, if taken together, embody a consummate and masterly expression of the loftiest moral attitude yet manifested to humanity. It is not too much to say that He has led men into the clearest of all spiritual atmospheres, that He has taught us to approach spiritual things in just that temper of mind which leads most surely to the right solution of moral problems as they are one by one presented to us and that His teaching may therefore be justly regarded as the supreme achievement of the human spirit.

To form such a judgment is an act no doubt of moral intuition which cannot be justified by mere argument: yet this judgment would appear to be within the reach of every open mind. To treat the moral teaching of the Pagan philosophers as in any sense equal to that of Jesus, is possible to those only who take the facts not as a whole but piecemeal. And one thing at least is demonstrably plain. The view that His teaching is identical with the morality of other systems, consisting merely of the commonplaces with which no religion can dispense, can

be held only by those who close their eyes to the evidence. Whether His teaching is true or false, it is at least distinctive.

It will be convenient—though the correctness of the current theory is in no way vital to the argument—to follow the commonly accepted division of the 'sources', and to begin therefore with the Second Gospel and the supposed 'non-Marcan document'.

St. Mark—whatever view we may ultimately come to take of him as a historian—is clearly no mere ignorant recounter of marvels. He stands, for example, on a much higher intellectual level than that of the earliest historians of the Franciscan Movement. Granted that there are in his Gospel touches of *naïveté* such as the later Evangelists were careful to eliminate, he is concerned, no less than they, with the great spiritual issues which belong to all time. It is he who points out that the parable concerning the washing of hands before meat is in effect a declaration that all meats are clean.[1] It is he alone who has preserved the fine phrase which condemns the blasphemer against the Holy Ghost as guilty of an 'eternal sin'.[2] There is indeed no ground whatever for the suspicion that the Master as He here appears is of lower spiritual or intellectual stature than in the portraits in the other Gospels.

We may notice—to begin with—how much the Second Gospel contains of the teaching which we are apt to regard as distinctively Pauline. St. Paul's greatest service to theology has been to define in unmistakable phrases the essence of 'spiritual religion'. He teaches that our

[1] Mark vii. 19, reading καθαρίζων. See R.V.
[2] Mark iii. 29, reading ἁμαρτήματος.

standing before God depends wholly on our inward frame of mind. 'To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure: but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.'[1] If all things are pure to the pure in heart, it follows—in sharp opposition with the Pagan and Jewish belief in the uncleanness of special material things, and with the Oriental belief in the evil nature of Matter in general—that nothing is unclean in itself; that nothing can become unclean except in relation to the perverse intention of a rational being; and consequently that all time, and all matter, are in themselves good, every day being worthy of esteem,[2] and the earth the Lord's and the fulness thereof.[3] Hence it arises that Christianity can be independent of externals without despising them. It is independent of 'works'—since works cannot justify,[4] while the pure heart apart from works can:[5] it is independent of wisdom—since though in our knowledge of Christ all the treasures of wisdom are implicitly contained,[6] and though we speak wisdom among the perfect,[7] men can yet be justified at the lowest stage of intellectual development:[8] it is independent of ordinances—since under the Gospel particular commands and rules can never be absolute.[9] The

[1] Titus i. 15. It is clear that these words sum up the Pauline view, elsewhere less compendiously expressed. The question therefore of the authorship of this Epistle is not here relevant.

[2] Rom. xiv. 5. [3] 1 Cor. x. 26.

[4] Gal. ii. 16. [5] Rom. iv. 6. [6] Col. ii. 3.

[7] 1 Cor. ii. 6. [8] 1 Cor. i. 26–27.

[9] Coloss. ii. 16, etc. Even the strictest sacramental teaching denies that the necessity of sacraments to salvation is absolute. They are held to be necessary 'where they may be had'. Cf. *Summa Theol.* part iii. 68 art. 2, and St. Ambrose's *De obitu Valentiniani Consolatio*, sec. 51.

soul which is subject to the Law of Love is *ipso facto* free from every other law. Since nothing can override the Law of Love,[1] and since nothing can be required to supplement it,[2] it follows that, except in subordination to this law and as mere cases of its application, other laws can have no place in Christianity at all. 'Against love' therefore 'there is no law.'[3] Hence the Christian is subject not to the letter but to the spirit[4] and so is free,[5] the one principle which rules him being a principle which he understands and voluntarily accepts.

The chief Pauline doctrines and phrases are united thus by a simple thread of connexion. But can we not for every one of these doctrines find a parallel in the pages of St. Mark? Here too it is taught that the pure heart is the one condition by which all things become good to us. It is by a change of heart[6] that the Kingdom of God is to be prepared for; it is to those who have a mind open to welcome God's blessings[7] and His commands[8] that the Master attributes the faith which stands in contrast with the hardness of heart of those who are in bondage to their own preconceived theories: it is this 'faith' which alone opens to us all God's gifts.[9] And how could the fundamental principle of all spiritual religion be expressed with more convincing felicity than in the epigram that 'not that which goeth into the mouth, but that which cometh out of it, defileth the man'?[10] Thus we are brought to that very attitude towards works, wisdom, and ordinances,

[1] Cf. St. Mark. xii. 31. [2] Cf. St. Matt. xxii. 40.
[3] Gal. v. 23. [4] Rom. ii. 29; vii. 6; 2 Cor. iii. 6.
[5] Rom. vii. 2–6; Gal. v. 1.
[6] μετάνοια, Mark i. 15. [7] ii. 5.
[8] iv. 20. [9] iv. 25. [10] vii. 20.

which was defined in more technical language by St. Paul. The Master is described as teaching clearly that good works may even be an obstacle to the reception of the Gospel;[1] that the simplicity of the child is no disqualification for membership in His Kingdom;[2] that rules and ordinances are to be judged simply by the good or evil that results from them;[3] that since the Sabbath was made for man, man is lord of the Sabbath.[4]

On the subject of spiritual religion then, Jesus teaches—according to St. Mark—the whole Pauline view.

Nor is the disciple above his Master. Apart from the Pauline distinctions between 'faith' and 'works', 'grace' and 'nature', the 'flesh' and the 'spirit', the true drift of much of the Gospel teaching might have been missed. Yet the language used by Jesus in the Second Gospel, though less systematic than St. Paul's, is wider in appeal, more final, more convincing. It is Jesus Who speaks with the more masterly air of ease and grace, with the readier wealth of illustration and epigram. St. Paul speaks, after all, as a Rabbi of the schools: Jesus speaks in the language of common life.

The truth is that, wherever they can be compared, the Master is plainly above the disciple. Though optimistic doctrine—the belief in the goodness of matter and of the things of sense—is a fundamental part of the Apostle's theory, his teaching is not pervaded as the Master's is with the optimistic sentiment. So clear is the Apostle's sense of the unique value of the 'New',—of the dispensation of Grace, of Liberty, of the Spirit,—that he is apt to

[1] ii. 17. Cf. St. Luke xv. 7. [2] x. 15. [3] iii. 4.
[4] ii. 27, 28. The argument becomes a *non sequitur* if the words 'Son of Man' are here referred in any exclusive sense to the Master Himself. Cf. Chrysostom's *Homilies on St. Matthew* xxxix.

undervalue the 'Old'—to see little in his past life but the galling bondage of the letter, and even at times to opine that in his flesh dwelleth no good thing.[1] Of such Puritanism on its weaker side there is in the Master's own teaching no sign. Of the novelty of His doctrine He is—in the Marcan account no less than in the other Gospels—well aware:[2] and He teaches unhesitatingly that there is but one sole condition for the reception of the highest gifts, and that from him that hath it not is taken away all that he seemeth to have. Yet he freely recognizes the value of those gifts of nature which, though not themselves the one thing needful, yet predispose the mind thereto. Just as in the Third Gospel we read of Him as declaring the harlot's sins forgiven 'because she loved much,'[3] so in the Marcan narrative He applies the term 'faith' to the eagerness, persistence, and hope, with which the sick man's friends desire for him a purely earthly blessing.[4] In a similar spirit he declares the value not only of childish innocence,[5] but of the earlier stages in every spiritual development. 'First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.'[6] He does not indeed say that works

[1] Rom. vii. 18. [2] St. Mark ii. 19, 22.

[3] St. Luke vii. 47. It is said both 'that she loved because she was forgiven', and 'that she was forgiven because she loved'. The words do not necessarily imply that passionate gratitude and personal devotion to Christ after the flesh can of themselves reconcile a soul to God. No more need be meant than that her love, the remote cause, led to repentance, the immediate cause, of justification.

[4] St. Mark ii. 5. Cf. x. 51. [5] St. Mark x. 15.

[6] St. Mark iv. 28. It is strange that in the light of this phrase any scholar should hold that the Founder of our Religion was—as John Baptist may well have been—a 'man of one idea', a sharer in the vulgar apocalyptic notions. With St. Mark iv. 28 compare xiii. 28: and see Mr. Percy Gardner's suggestion (*Jowett Lectures*, chap. iv.), that the reference to the fig tree

done 'before the grace of Christ' deserve grace *de congruo*[1]—for such a notion of merit is alien to His teaching[2]—yet in His general attitude on this subject He is certainly in some respects nearer to those who have affirmed this position than to some who have impugned it.

We need not indeed go beyond St. Mark to find the portrait of One Who combines a Puritan strictness[3] with a total absence of the harshness, the sourness, the narrowness which that term is held to connote; Who unites the enthusiasms of diverse religious schools while eschewing their perversions. He would have His disciples cultivate a Franciscan independence of earthly resources.[4] He affirms that 'taking up the cross' is a condition of true discipleship.[5] Yet He evinces no tendency to regard the good things of this life as merely transitory and valueless;[6] no inclination to the view that childhood and youth are vanity,[7] no contempt for bodily pleasures[8] and needs. It is not rebuked as a sign of a wordly mind, but praised as an act of faith, that the blind man, without a word concerning higher blessings, asks to receive his sight.[9] The very connexion which Jesus perceives between healing of body and forgiveness of sin[10] is enough by itself

appears here in a wrong context which 'spoils a fine natural parable'. It has been similarly suggested that in St. Matt. xxiv. 27 'the shining which cometh from the east even unto the west' refers not to the lightning but to the dawn. Cf. St. Luke xi. 36. *Aeschylus Fragm.* 372.

[1] *Articles of Religion of the Church of England.* Art. XIII.

[2] St. Luke xvii. 10. [3] Cf. Luke xiii. 3, 5. Matt. vii. 11.

[4] St. Mark vi. 8. [5] St. Mark viii. 34.

[6] As in the hymn 'Passing soon and little worth, Are the things which tempt on earth.'

[7] Eccles. xi. 10.

[8] With St. Matt. xi. 19 cf. Mark ii. 19, etc.

[9] St. Mark. x. 51. [10] St. Mark ii. 9.

to prove that He regarded bodily health as good. Epictetus would console a man for the loss of his wife by the reflection that after all she was but a woman.[1] Jesus, on the other hand, far from belittling the gifts which He asks in sacrifice, rather exalts the commonest services[2]—and assigns to those who shall most humbly serve the highest place among His disciples.[3] It is in the same spirit that He commands toleration of him 'who followeth not us'.[4]

Can we then read the Second Gospel without perceiving that its Central Figure is One Who surrounds Himself at all times with an atmosphere of tenderness, humility and fearlessness, Who inculcates through His sense of the overflowing bounty of God a bountiful generosity toward men, which explains that which will always stand out as the most striking element in Renan's picture—namely the air of sunny cheerfulness which belongs to those who in the presence of the Master were indeed children of the bride-chamber ?[5]

Thus Jesus, as sketched by St. Mark, unites elements which—to say the least—are but rarely united elsewhere. He teaches a religion of supreme 'good sense'—which shall judge observances solely by the good they can accomplish[6]—yet a religion which is very far removed from the mere vulgar "common sense" which demands nothing more than tolerance and good nature. Infinitely tolerant with regard to matters which are of no real importance,[7] He is yet infinitely strict with regard to that which may cause the little one to stumble.[8]

[1] *Encheiridion*, § 3.
[2] St. Mark ix. 41.
[3] St. Mark ix. 35; x. 43, 44.
[4] St. Mark ix. 38.
[5] St. Mark ii. 19.
[6] St. Mark iii. 4.
[7] St. Mark ii. 23.
[8] St. Mark ix. 42.

His attitude too is as unlike that of the ordinary religious man in its doctrinal, as in its moral, outlook. There has been much speculation as to the meaning of the words concerning the 'mystery of the Kingdom'.[1] On one point at least the language is clear. In the Kingdom of God no mystery is ultimate: since 'nothing is made secret but that it should come to light.' If this statement is to be taken as universal in meaning, as it is in form, we could ask for no more philosophic theory concerning the place of mystery, ignorance, and delusion in the life of man. 'All that God is,' says Hegel, 'He reveals.'[2] 'God', we read, 'is light and in Him is no darkness at all.'[3] The Master surely—on St. Mark's showing—would have been as severe a critic of the obscurantism of much subsequent theology as of the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees.

It is often objected that modern theology—eager to claim Jesus as its own—builds too much upon single passages, and that these moreover are arbitrarily interpreted in the light of modern conceptions. Scepticism of this sort may be carried even further. It may be suggested that all the teaching in this Gospel is but a chance collection of striking sayings, delivered on various occasions, and possessing no general significance whatever. It is possible, for example, (though this reading meets with no support from the context)[4] to interpret the mystery of the Kingdom in a trivial sense—to suppose it some mere secret

[1] St. Mark. iv. 11; cf. iv. 22.

[2] *Logic*, Eng. Trans. p. 254 (2nd edit. Clarendon Press, 1892).

[3] 1 John i. 5.

[4] The words are used in relation to the Parable of the Sower, a parable whose significance is obviously moral rather than Eschatological.

which for motives of policy it was not prudent immediately to disclose. With regard to many other passages, taken singly, a fairly good case may be made for interpretations of a similar character. But can such negative views ever survive a prolonged study of the Marcan narrative as a whole, except in those who are exceptionally destitute of moral perception? For do we not come in contact in this Gospel with an original but self-consistent attitude towards life—an attitude moreover which possesses the distinction of a supreme sanity?

Turning from St. Mark to the 'non-Marcan document'[1] we find material which is almost wholly new, and yet the same general traits remain. There is here the same insistence upon the spirituality and inwardness of true religion—if the eye is single the whole body will be full of light;[2] the same perception that men are to be judged by their response to God's call and not by their achievements—it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for Chorazin and Bethsaida;[3] the same spirit of broad tolerance, overflowing love and open-handed generosity;[4] the same optimistic joyousness;[5] the same sense of the high prerogative of the

[1] This 'Source'—according to Dr. Harnack's re-construction of it—is printed *in extenso* in Mr. Conybeare's *Myth, Magic and Morals*, chap. vii. For Greek text see *The Sayings of Jesus* (Crown Theol. Library).

[2] St. Matt. vi. 22; St. Luke xi. 34. Harnack § 32.

[3] St. Matt. xi. 22; St. Luke x. 14; Harnack § 23.

[4] With St. Mark vi. 34; ix. 37, 39, 41 etc. cf. St. Luke xvii. 3, 4; St. Matt. v. 39, 40, 42, 44, 48, etc. Cf. 'good measure, shaken together and running over.' Harnack § 4, 5, 6, 54.

[5] St. Luke vi. 23; xii. 22, 31, etc. Cf. however xii. 51, 53; Harnack § 3, 35, 38.

simple ;[1] the same high value set upon each human soul ;[2] the same union of tender love with stern wisdom.[3] And even where we encounter quite new elements, the teaching is dominated still by the same temper. We have here as unmistakable evidence as in St. Mark of a clearly thought-out doctrinal position. Jesus is represented as contrasting the mission and teaching of His predecessors with His own : the law and the prophets which lasted 'until John' with the Kingdom of God.[4] For this Kingdom the qualifications are not national but spiritual.[5] And Jesus not only contrasts Himself with the Baptist in relation to their opposite methods of life,[6] but points to His own teaching as that which fulfils the highest aspirations of the past.[7] And further, though John is acknowledged as equal to the greatest teachers of past time, it is yet said that he that is but little in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.[8] In the light of this passage—if we allow ourselves to reflect upon the use in such a connexion of the very phrase the 'Kingdom of God' at all—it will be hard to deny that the 'non-Marcan document' represents Jesus as claiming the position of Founder of the 'Absolute Religion'. What meaning does the modern phrase convey that goes beyond what the passage quoted unmistakably requires ? [9]

[1] St. Luke x. 21, 22 ; Harnack § 25.

[2] With St. Mark ix. 42 cf. St. Luke xii. 6, 7 ; xv. 4–7. Harnack § 34 A, 48, 54. Cf. also 'maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good.'

[3] St. Luke xii. 58, 59 ; xvii. 1 ; Harnack § 39, 53.

[4] St. Luke xvi. 16 ; Harnack, § 50.

[5] St. Luke xiii. 28–29 ; Harnack, § 42.

[6] St. Luke vii. 33, 34 ; Harnack, § 15.

[7] St. Luke x. 24 ; Harnack, § 26.

[8] St. Luke vii. 18–28 ; Harnack, § 14.

[9] Cf. St. Luke xx. 13.

There is one other aspect of the general religious theory here attributed to the Master—namely His attitude towards miracles—to which only a passing reference need now be made since it will occupy our attention below.[1] It is true, however, that His words contain a view of miracle far nearer to what we might expect from a Christian divine in the eighteenth century than to the uncritical conceptions we are apt to attribute to the first age. Whether Jesus actually performed miracles or not, the doctrines attributed to Him on this subject by the Evangelists are far less akin to primitive and magical notions than to the Christian rationalism of Paley.[2]

That the same general impression of the Central Figure which is gained from St. Mark is confirmed not only in many passages in the Non-Marcan source, but likewise in many that are peculiar to the first Evangelist or the third, will probably be denied by no careful student. It is only necessary to mention here the Parable of the Prodigal Son, of the Unmerciful Servant, of the Good Samaritan, and lastly the advice, when we have done all things that are commanded us to say 'We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do';[3]

[1] Chap. xviii.

[2] The 'rationalistic' element—if we may so call it—in the teaching of Jesus has been too little recognized. For example, Kant's interpretation of the question 'Why callest thou me good?' seems far saner than the explanations of more modern interpreters. 'Why call ye Me (Whom ye see) good. There is none good (the Archetype—*Urbild*—of the Good) but God alone (Whom ye see not).' *Grundlegung*, p. 408.

[3] St. Luke xvii. 10.

to suggest the wealth of confirmation of this assertion which study of the Gospels can supply.

Nor is the argument affected by the presence of a few passages where a false note is struck. It is indeed surprising, considering the literary conditions of the time, how few of such passages can be pointed to ;[1] and common sense will surely be more impressed by the multitude of passages which go to form and confirm our impression than by the few which contradict it.

Again the impression of originality is neither destroyed nor weakened by the production of parallels from the literature of other religions. We may recall the well-known story of the antiquarian who after showing to a

[1] The most conspicuous perhaps of these is in Luke xi. 37, etc., where the discourse against the Pharisees is described as being spoken at a Pharisee's table. But St. Matt. xxiii. 1 asserts that the discourse was spoken 'to the multitudes'. See Harnack, § 33.

Other passages where incidents or phrases are alleged which on various grounds have seemed to some modern readers to be unworthy of the Master, are the following :—Mark xi. 14 (fig-tree) ; vi. 11 ('shake off dust.' Cf. Luke x. 8–11. Harnack, § 22) ; vii. 6 ; iv. 39 (πεφίμωσο cf. i. 25 and Matt. xxii. 34 and see also Matt. viii. 26 ; Luke viii. 24) ; v. 12–13. (Note, however, that the view of some commentators, that the destruction of the swine was no part of our Lord's intention, finds confirmation in His immediate compliance with the request of the people (v. 18)). Luke viii. 46 (but cf. Mark v. 30) ; Mark xi. 15 ; ix. 19 ; xiv. 61 and xv. 5 (but cf. Isaiah liii. 7) ; xii. 38 ; Luke xi. 41 (according to one interpretation). Can any one seriously desire to add Mark xiv. 21 ? It is to be noted that, in Dr. Harnack's reconstructed 'Source' (Q), not a single passage occurs which any reader is likely to wish to add to this list. Yet it would be absurd to argue that the principles on which Dr. Harnack has proceeded make this result a foregone conclusion. His method is, so far as the main outlines are concerned, purely textual and objective.

sculptor friend how one by one the characteristic features of Greek sculpture had been anticipated by the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and the Hittites, exclaimed in triumph that the Greeks had in fact invented nothing. 'Nothing' rejoined the sculptor, 'except the beautiful.' Similarly, even if we could show for each saying of Christ a parallel in non-Christian literature, we should not alter the fact that Christianity is a unique phenomenon, and that the teaching recorded in the Gospels is its starting-point. Jesus stands out as the greatest, nay as the first effective, exponent of spiritual religion in the distinctive Christian sense: and also of the general ideal of human conduct which alone is adequate thereto.

The latter fact is hardly less important than the former. The connexion between spiritual religion and the Good Will we have already observed. But what definition of a Good Will can we frame which can be seriously and practically accepted by modern religion, except that which describes it as a Will devoted to the carrying out of the Ideal set up by Christ?

## CHAPTER X

## THE HISTORICAL JESUS

THE teaching, then, which is attributed to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels is very far from confirming the notion that He was a mere 'Syrian of the first century with a message for His own time alone'. Moreover a careful reading of these Gospels throws doubt on many of the conclusions that have been drawn from His use of Eschatological language.

Did He 'elaborately prophesy what did not take place'—His own return on the clouds of heaven before the first generation of His followers had passed away, or even before His twelve disciples should have come back from their earliest mission? The charge is unproven and incapable of proof. There are few single texts of which we can say positively, 'Here we have the *ipsissima verba* of the Master.' There are fewer still where we can completely know the context. Every theory—orthodox and unorthodox alike—as to the order and connexion of events in the life of Christ has its difficulties—its scriptural texts which it must ignore or explain away. There are texts which seem to imply a speedy return: there are texts also which imply that the Christian Church will run a prolonged course:[1] and it is not always easy to

[1] E.g., Matt. xxi. 43; Mark xiii. 7, 8; Mark xiii. 10. With ἀποδημος Mark xiii. 34, cf. ἀπεδήμησε Mark xii. 1 (where a prolonged absence is implied). Matt. xxiv. 48.

decide, in this case or in others, which class of texts[1] is the most trustworthy.

With regard to Christ's language concerning His Messianic claims there is need for caution in a very special degree. The situation was of necessity an extraordinarily delicate one. Unless He was to disavow Messianic conceptions and hopes altogether, He must needs claim to be Himself the Messiah. Yet, on any theory, there must have been some elements in the popular conception which He could not adopt. Let us admit that the current Jewish conceptions of His day were less unspiritual than has been sometimes assumed. Let us admit that Jesus Himself was more sympathetic towards belief in the 'supernatural' than are some modern divines who have tried to assimilate His views to their own. He must still have had need to choose His language carefully. Unwilling to speak chillingly of hopes which had in them much of good, He may yet—so conscious is He of the slowness of spiritual progress,[2] so fixed in His avoidance of short methods [3]—have definitely refused to foster what He would not too decisively condemn.[4] It is only natural that, in a situation of such complexity, His words should at times have been misunderstood and consequently misreported. This, perhaps, then is one of the cases where the results of German diligence may be modified by the application of English caution and commonsense.

[1] So with interpretations also. In some cases we may say that the meaning is clear and that there seems no adequate motive for invention, distortion or mistake: but such an assertion can seldom be made with absolute confidence, since some currents of Christian opinion in the First Century are necessarily unknown to us.

[2] Mark iv. 27, 28, 29, 31.

[3] Matt. iv. 3, 6, 9.

[4] Cf. Matt. xiii. 29.

But we are not left with mere doubts and negations. There is one fact which is far more certain than the accuracy or correct interpretation of any isolated passage: namely that, in scene after scene and in phrase after phrase—indeed with very few lapses from perfect consistency [1]—the Synoptic Gospels describe a character and a doctrine which meets our own highest aspirations, 'the perfection [2] of an ideal above and beyond which we cannot get.' Jesus, we are warned, is not to be modernized. But if He was not a modern man, we assuredly are modern men ourselves: and the fact remains that we find in the Gospels (not in the form of abstract principles but in a vivid personal presentation) an embodiment of what a great part of the civilized world does still undoubtedly recognize as the highest conception of morality and religion. The historical significance of this fact can hardly be overstated.

'The modern study of the Gospels' it has been said 'has recovered for us a Portrait.' While to many devout souls in all ages the Portrait has been clear enough, to others it has been long obscured. Yet if for some of us an effort is needed to grasp the individuality of Jesus as the Gospels present Him, the effort is one which may be made with good hope of success. Indeed a simple experiment will be enough to show that most people have latent in their minds a far clearer conception of the character of the Saviour than they are themselves explicitly aware

[1] Cf. last note to chap. ix. What is here said as to consistency refers, of course, to the character and doctrine of the Master; not to the order of events.

[2] It is important to interpret this word with reference to the qualification expressed above. The ideal is not 'perfect' in the sense that it contains explicit instruction upon every moral question.

of. Let us try to put into His mouth phrases uttered by others whose circumstances were externally similar to His. There are no persons in history, perhaps, whose circumstances have so much general resemblance to those of Jesus, as Socrates and Francis of Assisi. Yet we cannot without an immediate sense of incongruity imagine Jesus professing ironical ignorance in the manner of Socrates, or calling Himself the 'little poor man of Nazareth' in the manner of St. Francis. It is surely no accident that where He speaks of Himself in the third person it is by the statelier title of the 'Son of Man'. Our conception of His individuality, then, must really be pretty clear, if we can so instantaneously perceive these incongruities. Thus perhaps little is needed except that we should make the impression which we already possess fuller and more definite.

It is true that a vivid portrait may be fictitious: and even where the character as a whole is true to life, many of the incidents in which the presentation of it is embodied may be sheer inventions or mistakes. But it is the character of Jesus, rather than His history, which concerns us here: and before deciding whether the description is fictitious or historical, the first step is to perceive the unity and uniqueness of the character itself as the Synoptic writers describe it.

The unity of the character is, if possible, even more striking than the unity of the teaching. Jesus—it has been well said—'was what He taught.' Throughout the Synoptic Gospels He is consistently described as One Whose whole soul is possessed with that conception of the 'one thing needful' which we have already seen to be the keynote of His teaching. The sole demand which He

makes of all those who come to Him is that they should have the spirit exhibited by Mary of Bethany—the spirit of Christian discipleship. Whether this spirit exhibits itself as penitence, as docility,[1] or as the humble self-surrender of those who leave all to follow Him,[2]—whether it is seen in the scribe who perceives that right dispositions of mind are more important than external works,[3] in the centurion who concludes that the power of faith is at least as independent of distance as the discipline of the Roman army,[4] or in the four men whose 'love forgetting manners' tears down the roof where He is teaching [5]—an open mind, a pure heart, a zealous eagerness for good, never fails to find from Him a welcome. On one occasion, with definite symbolical intent, He sets a child in the midst of His disciples;[6] on another—in a manner not unusual with St. Francis but not elsewhere recorded of the Master Himself—He breaks out aloud into an ecstasy of joy[7] at the thought that it is to the simple mind only that heavenly truth is made known. Similarly when His withdrawal from the scene of His preaching is forestalled[8] by the eagerness of the multitude, He dismisses His project of rest from His mind in a sudden outburst of compassion.

Indeed it is just in His occasional outbursts of strong and sudden feeling—whether of compassion, grief, anger, love or joy—that the ruling principle of His life stands out most clearly. His grief at hardness of heart is as conspicuous as His pity for sorrow. At an example of spiritual obtuseness joined with familiarity with religious language, He sighs deeply in His spirit.[9] When the

[1] Luke x. 42. [2] Mark x. 29. [3] Mark xii. 34.
[4] Matt. viii. 9. [5] Luke v. 19, 20. [6] Mark ix. 36.
[7] Luke x. 21, cf. *Fioretti*, ch. viii., ch. x. etc.
[8] Mark vi. 31–34. [9] Mark viii. 12.

disciples assume that babes will be of no interest to Him, He is much displeased.[1] When on the other hand He finds, even in one unready to make the supreme sacrifice which is required of him, a genuine desire for better things 'looking upon him He loves him.'[2] In every case of real insight He awards praise with the outspoken warmth which belongs to the generous nature to which praise-giving is a delight.[3]

Precisely the same general view of life is expressed—with entire consistency of spirit amid a wide variety of phrase and circumstance—in His aphorisms, His parables, His actions; in His reception of the woman that was a sinner,[4] in the rebuke conveyed to His disciples by means of the parable of the labourers in the vineyard,[5] in the declaration that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine impenitent righteous.[6] In this refusal to judge conduct by mere results He comes into conflict with the common morality of the modern,[7] no less than with that of the ancient world.

[1] Mark x. 14. [2] Mark x. 21.
[3] Mark xii. 34; Matt. xvi. 17.
[4] Luke vii. 37.
[5] Matt. xx. 12; cf. xix. 27, 30.
[6] Luke xv. 7.
[7] It is necessary to insist upon this because it is continually denied. The notion that the Gospels teach only those commonplaces of morality with which no civilized religion can dispense is common still, even in circles not professedly hostile to Christianity. A high dignitary of the Church is reported to have declared recently that at the time of the Crucifixion the disciples had had no decisively new teaching, that nothing had then been said which could have made them Christians rather than Jews, and that the novelty of Christianity consisted not in Christ's teaching, but solely in the fact of His resurrection. Even the attacks of Nietzsche are less unedifying than such statements as these: since he at least recognizes our Lord as a great Teacher,

For those, however, who have ears to hear, His comment on the Widow's offering is a triumphant vindication of His principles against His critics. While the work of His disciples is the pursuit of justice and mercy—by their fruits ye shall know them—it is yet the fidelity of the pursuit rather than its success by which He chiefly judges. The Good Will—the honest and good heart—this alone is the pearl of greatest price; and the mere paucity of its achievement in no way detracts from its value.

The same central conception is the key also to His polemic. While demanding of every disciple the thorough-going sincerity which 'counting the cost' is willing to perform humble services,[1] to 'bear the cross', to 'endure to the end', He resists with indignation the imposition of any other demands whatever. His zeal for the 'one thing needful' has, as its obverse side, a burning wrath against those who represent as needful that which is not so—against those who 'condemn the guiltless'[2] and bind heavy burdens on the shoulders of men.[3] True obedience consists, not in refusing the demands of Caesar, but in giving what is due to God.[4]

His sense of the supreme value of spiritual religion is shown, perhaps, even more clearly still in His language concerning those tendencies in human nature by which spiritual religion is in every age opposed—the unforgiving spirit, lust, pride, covetousness. It is here—says Mr. Conybeare[5] in felicitous language—that Jesus 'sharpened His precepts to a point, and imported an almost para-

as one who taught something that was not already well known before He came.

[1] Matt. xxv. 40, etc., etc.
[2] Matt. xii. 7.
[3] Matt. xxiii. 4; Luke xi. 46.
[4] Mark xii. 17.
[5] *Myth, Magic and Morals*, p. 162.

doxical vigour into His utterances, just because He desired to raise a hedge against the most common forms of selfishness.' Against the pressure of petty cares—the 'lusts of other things entering in'—He recommends a freedom from anxiety, a perpetual watchfulness in regard to man's highest interests,[1] a general attitude of 'detachment', of independence of circumstances,[2] such as only a concentration of mind upon the one thing needful can produce. 'Be not anxious what ye shall eat:[3] be not anxious what ye shall say:[4] seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.' In His service there can be no divided allegiance, and no neutrality. 'He that is not with Me is against Me.'[5] 'Be not anxious, for ye cannot serve God and Mammon.'[6]

The whole life, then, of Jesus as the Gospels portray it is an embodiment of the principle which puts 'first things first'. Yet He is in one respect markedly unlike others who have been conspicuous for their success in seizing this principle and applying it. Those teachers with whom the supreme interests of the spirit have been habitually predominant, incline for the most part to a quality of feeling which can best be described, in Northern idiom, as 'dourness'. Of Luther, of St. Augustine, even of St. Paul, there may be quoted phrases which carry with them something that is repellent. Kant—not wholly without ground—was accused of pedantry by his most distinguished disciple. Newman—for whom there were

[1] Mark xiii. 33, 37, etc., etc.

[2] Mark xiii. 2, 5, 7, 11. 'Be not anxious' though the Temple of God be 'thrown down'.

[3] Matt. vi. 31.

[4] Mark xiii. 11.

[5] Matt. xii. 30.

[6] Matt. vi. 24, 25.

but two 'supreme and luminously self-evident beings' God and his own soul—exhibits in some contexts a 'dourness' which is almost inhuman. None of these great men would very naturally be described as 'children of the bridechamber'. The attitude of Jesus becomes only the plainer by the contrast. 'To him that worketh not' says St. Paul 'but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.' Although if we compare this Pauline phrase with the words of Jesus to the dying robber we shall find no essential difference of meaning, there is assuredly a quite infinite difference in gracefulness. And is not this gracefulness of utterance the symbol of a liberality of view,—not acquired as in the Apostle's case through the turmoil of an inward revolution, but rather the native endowment of His spirit—which appears also in His tolerance,[1] in the conspicuous gentleness of His rebukes,[2] in His courteous recognition of what is good in men even where there is need of warning and condemnation,[3] in His tenderness to the religious system which He is come to supersede,[4] in His sympathy with the natural feelings of the heart even when these are expressed in an entirely unconventional manner,[5] in His recognition of the value, not only of human souls but also, in their place, of the lives of animals?[6] To Jesus as the Synoptists portray Him the gifts of nature

[1] Mark ix. 39, 40. The contradiction suspected by some between Mark ix. 40 and Matt. xii. 30 arises only if it is assumed that the question is 'Are neutrals to be classed as friends or foes?'—not if it is recognized that there are *no* neutrals.

[2] E.g. Mark xiv. 37; Luke x. 41; Luke xxii. 31, 61; xi. 28.

[3] E.g. Luke xxii. 28, cf. 24; Mark xii. 34.

[4] E.g. Mark i. 44; Mark xi. 16, 17.

[5] Luke vii. 45; Mark ii. 4, 5.

[6] Luke xii. 6.

seem good, as well as the gifts of grace. Conscious of the universal sinfulness of the human race,[1] He yet recognizes the natural innocence of childhood; and finds, among those born in sin and not yet of an age to make their personal peace with God, a purity of heart akin to that[2] which is the supreme qualification for His Kingdom.

There is another aspect of the Portrait also which must not be lost sight of. If the life of Jesus revealed to mankind the supreme lesson which it has been the glory of St. Paul, of Luther, and of Kant, to have developed and defended in special contexts—if this lesson was taught by Jesus with an ease and charm which they conspicuously lack, and taught by Him to many to whom neither St. Paul, Luther, nor Kant can ever be intelligible—then not only is the life of Jesus the supreme achievement in the history of religion, but His achievement is intellectual as well as moral.

His intellectual pre-eminence is, in fact, as noteworthy in its way as His holiness. A modern writer has spoken of His belief in His Messianic office as an 'obsession'. A more infelicitous phrase it would be hard to select. The impression which the narrative consistently conveys is of One Who teaches truly, not by happy accident or passing inspiration, but because He knows the ultimate secret of right moral thinking. His teaching is based on principles, and He never hesitates to give His reasons. Resembling the Mystics in the penetrating power of His phrases, He has no resemblance to them at all in their unconsciousness of the processes by which their knowledge is reached. Nor again does He resemble the philosopher

[1] Luke xiii. 3, 5. [2] Mark x. 14; cf. Matt. xviii. 10.

spoken of by Plato who is so blinded by the light from whence he came that he cannot see clearly in terrestrial darkness. His clear and critical estimate of the false religious teaching around Him is joined with a general knowledge of the world, an ability to deal wisely with men, a rapid insight into the thoughts of his opponents[1], an easy readiness in dealing promptly with cunningly devised objections,[2] an amazing fertility in the production of felicitous arguments, similes, and illustrations, an attitude towards the 'supernatural' which can only be described as 'modern'. Though He is represented as believing in miracles and also working them, He is wholly at variance with His contemporaries in His estimate of their worth.[3]

[1] Matt. ix. 4; xii. 25; Luke v. 22; vi. 8; ix. 47, etc.

[2] Mark xii. 17, 24.

[3] 'In this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you' (Luke x. 20). The difference between our Saviour's attitude towards the supernatural, and that of His disciples, can more readily be felt than described. A story which represented the Master as allowing His action to be dictated, as St. Paul's was, by a dream, would be felt to be quite out of keeping. It is difficult, therefore, to accept Mr. Streeter's guess that an 'audible voice divine' heard at the Baptism was the decisive factor in leading our Saviour to adopt the Messianic rôle (*Foundations*, p. 100). If (p. 98 note) 'the stories of the Baptism and the Temptation are ultimately derived from an account given to the disciples by our Lord Himself', why should we suspect that the Voice from Heaven is any less a 'part of the parable' than the visible Tempter? (Matt. iii. 17; iv. 3). This, and a similar passage on p. 123, seem less convincing than other parts of Mr. Streeter's valuable essay. There were, surely, quite enough 'rational' motives for the visit to Jerusalem to make it needless to look for merely 'psychological' ones. Those who are acquainted with the phenomena of "leading" (p. 123 note) at first hand will best be in position to form a general judgment on this subject. They, if they want scriptural analogies for these modern experiences—which are often quite genuine and

Indeed through passage after passage we may trace the signs of a rightness of temper and outlook which is in itself an intellectual virtue as truly as it is a moral one.

No less remarkable than this correctness of insight is the air of confident assurance which accompanies it, and the fact that this self-confidence is accepted by the reader without resentment. Jesus speaks at all times—even when dealing with the most intricate problems[1]—as One who is conscious of an unerring certainty of aim. Joined with the utmost humility and gentleness, is a serene self-possession, a confidence in His own judgment which permits Him, whether He speaks in praise or blame, to use even the strongest expressions without misgiving. It is quite in keeping with this that at a certain time His opponents should be afraid to ask Him any further question,[2] and that a similar awe of Him should be ascribed to His own disciples.[3]

He makes, too, the highest claims on His own behalf. He speaks of Himself as the Bridegroom, the Heir, the Son of man before Whom all members of God's Kingdom are to stand,[4] Who is to come in the clouds of heaven, in Whose blood God's new covenant is to be made with His people. And yet—sensitive as the modern reader is to the wearisomeness of the 'too faultless' hero—was ever a reader of the Synoptic Gospels led to complain, either that the claims of their Central Figure

quite edifying—are likely to turn rather to the Acts than to the Gospels. Why should we assume that He Who commended the wisdom of the serpent (Matt. x. 16) disdained to 'study tactics and opportunities'?

[1] Mark ii. 17, etc.
[2] Mark xii. 34.
[3] Mark ix. 32.
[4] Luke xxi. 36.

are intolerable, or that an occasional error or fault would be welcome as a relief?

Why is it then that here, for the first and last time in literature, we are ready to accept a hero free from blemishes, without the sense that a few faults and the consciousness of them would make him more attractive and more human? The reason is partly that in Jesus the air of intellectual ascendancy is wholly dissevered from the common faults of the intellectual man. In the case of Socrates a certain touch of the pride of intellect may be observed even amid the affecting scenes which precede his death.[1] Jesus deals tenderly not only with His male disciples but also with the women who bewailed and lamented Him. He affects no Stoical superiority to suffering. He faces death and pain, not only with a confessed oppression of spirit[2] incompatible with the Stoic temper, but also with a profound solemnity of manner consonant with the Jewish sense of the connexion between suffering and sin.[3] He can be 'sore amazed' as well as very heavy, and—though amid all distractions He speaks as if His will within were throughout steady and undistracted—He yet feels to the full the weight both of His sufferings and of the problem it carries with it.[4] In the whole story of the Passion there is exhibited at once clear-minded self-possession and extremest human tenderness, even when at the last stage of mortal weakness the darkness invades His soul.

But the chief reason why in the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels we do not feel that faultlessness is itself a fault, is that we have here so convincing a picture of One who

[1] Phaedo. 60. A. B.

[2] Mark xiv. 34.

[3] Which He is represented as teaching explicitly elsewhere. Mark xv. 34.

stands for interests which are not personal but general. His emotions—'personal' indeed in the sense that He feels them with intensity—may yet be called 'impersonal' in the utter absence from His mind of all self-seeking. His indignation is so impressive just because it is so disinterested.[1] His rebukes and His commendations are far removed from the wounded and gratified vanity of the teacher who desires personal success. Personal homage to Himself is no substitute for loyalty to His principles.[2] He rejects even the simplest title of praise.[3] When a hearer blesses the Mother who bore Him, He gently points out to whom it is that blessing truly belongs. When Peter for once plays the courtier,[4] he receives the sternest of all the rebukes which Jesus is ever recorded to have uttered. He rebukes His disciples no less than His opponents, and praises faith equally in those who are not His followers and in those who are. Resistance to His mission and work He treats as blameworthy, not primarily because it is a resistance to His own person, but because it is a resistance to the Inward Voice.[5] The blasphemy against the Son of Man is a light offence compared with the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Thus there is nothing to suggest that in destroying one 'religion of authority' He is setting up another. When He calls men to Himself, He demands an eye open to read the signs of the times;[6] He desires that even of themselves they may judge that which is right;[7] He never asks for blind obedi-

[1] Mark viii. 33, etc.
[2] Luke vi. 46.
[3] Mark x. 18.
[4] Matt. xvi. 22.
[5] Luke xii. 10; cf. Mark iii. 28. St. Luke's development of the doctrine is covered, after all, by St. Mark's general statement.
[6] Matt. xvi. 3.
[7] Luke xii. 57.

ence to His personal authority as such. Rather it would be true to say that He ever forgets Himself in His mission: that His Father's work fills His whole horizon: that He wins the trust of His disciples by leading them to continual trust in God: that they who receive Jesus receive not Jesus but Him that sent Him.[1]

And thus—as the separate traits unite in our minds into a single Character—the effect produced is of a personality unlike any other in the world: of One unlike other men and yet unlike them in being more attractively human. That He stands, as no one else can do, for the Moral Law, that He evokes response from humanity on its best side, is vividly expressed in the oft-quoted saying of Lamb, that whereas if Shakespeare entered the room we should all stand—'if Jesus entered the room we should all kneel.' If we would see how pre-eminent a figure the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels really is, let us contrast Him, on the one hand with other representations which purport to be pictures of the same original,[2] and on the other hand with all that we know or have read of other men. Among His followers in especial there have been noble types of humanity in plenty—holy priests, pure-minded ascetics, learned divines. Yet His strongest attraction for the general mass of the human race has lain in the fact, not of His resemblance to these types, but of His difference from them: in the fact that His natural sympathies are predominantly with the Publican and not with the Pharisee. If we may venture to apply to Him the phrases which are appropriate to certain schools of His disciples, we may

[1] Mark ix. 37; cf. x. 18.

[2] Esp. the Jesus of Renan's 'Life'.

describe Him as a Protestant without pedantry, a Liberal without sentimentality, a Franciscan without childishness. No intellectualist, no mystic, no formalist, no ascetic,—for as He is without all other pedantry, so also He is without the pedantry of renunciation[1]—He differs broadly from every type of 'professional' religious man. Fitted, as no one else is, to be our Great High Priest in Heaven, He is yet eminently a laic upon earth.

Is it then conceivable or not that the Character of Jesus as it appears in the Synoptic Gospels is the result of conscious or unconscious fiction?[1] It is surely hard to believe that a character so marked in its originality and charm, is the mere product of the embellishment by the first Christian disciples of a more commonplace reality. The invention of a character possessing genuine individuality—of a 'character' as distinct from a 'type'—is rare even in the greatest works of genius. Where a character, real or fictitious, is already known to us by a multitude of sayings and characteristic incidents, the invention of further stories in the same vein is often comparatively easy. There are indeed few men of strong personality around whose names such stories do not grow up. But is it reasonable to suppose that the original sketch of the character of Jesus was anything else than a transcript from life? The reader of the Platonic dialogues may often be in the greatest doubt as to how many of the recorded sayings of Socrates were really his. The reader of the *Little Flowers*, the *Mirror of Perfection* or the *Legend of the Three Companions* may feel the same sort of doubt with regard to Francis of Assisi. But can we doubt that in

[1] Contrast the command *Ama nesciri.*

both these cases the character itself—the 'nucleus' around which the inventions gather and which alone gives them significance—is drawn from memory? Can we doubt that the impression which these books convey of contact with an actual personality is a correct one? And does not the character of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels bear the same stamp of truth?

But we are not left with vague impressions. The impression is confirmed by argument. 'Every saying', says Dr. Schweitzer—and we might as truly say 'Every incident'—'contains in its own way the whole Jesus.' To what men or group of men can the original invention of those sayings and scenes be ascribed? When the disciples of Jesus began to idealize Him, we know what direction their imagination took. When an Evangelist corrects his 'source', the correction is made too often under the influence of that abstract conception of divinity in which the divine is merely the opposite of the human.[1] The true majesty of Jesus is rather impaired by the correction than enhanced by it, just as the charm of Francis begins to vanish when his biographers assimilate him to the conventional saint. In the case of Socrates, the idealization was carried out with greater genius. But with the Central Figure of the Gospels, as with St. Francis, there is much to be said for the conclusion that it is just the blemishes in the picture which are its least historical features.

What bearing have these questions on the religious

[1] Cf. St. Mark iii. 5 with St. Matt. xii. 9–13, and St. Luke vi. 10. The first and third Gospels here omit both our Lord's 'anger' and His 'grief'. Cf. also St. Mark vi. 5, 6, with St. Matt. xiii. 58.

estimate of Jesus? The connexion between history and religion is here a close one. 'Of all the great figures', says Mr. Conybeare,[1] 'which look down upon us across the gulf and void of time, Jesus of Nazareth is the most gracious and winning of aspect: and although his memory was soon associated with that policy of craft and exclusiveness, of cruelty and credulity, which in East and West styled itself orthodoxy, nevertheless his name has ever been for the poor and oppressed, for the despised and disinherited of the earth, a bond and symbol of union in peace and charity'. If such is the estimate formed by one who views these questions in an attitude of detachment—and can any one deny that graciousness of aspect of which Mr. Conybeare speaks?—is it surprising if those who have made it the business of their lives not only to study the influence of Jesus, but actively to submit to it, see in Him even more than is perceived by the pure historian however open-minded? There are many of the great names in ancient history which even to this day are a living inspiration for conduct. But what if by contact with Jesus we discover in Him an inspiration which we feel to have an absolute claim in all respects to our obedience? There have been leaders who have led men to face with confidence what looked like overwhelming odds. But what if we find that we have learned from Jesus to face with confidence both death and the Hereafter, convinced that the whole Universe can contain nothing to abash those who have entrusted the guidance of their lives to His command? There are those of whom it has been said—metaphorically no doubt but none the less truly—that they look reproach-

[1] *Myth Magic and Morals*, p. xi.

fully at us from out of the past. But what if, when we examine our lives as in His presence—with the eyes of the 'recovered Portrait' upon us,—we find such language so supremely applicable to Jesus that the sense that it is metaphorical is lost?

> His kind but searching glance can scan
> The very faults which shame would hide.

It is easy to suggest that the writer of such words was under the influence of theological presuppositions, and for the rest was drawing on his imagination. Yet may he not, after all, have been describing a genuine experience, such as those who do not share his theological outlook may themselves in turn repeat?

We may go yet further. We may ask whether even the dogma of the sinlessness of Jesus itself is unsupported by historical evidence. It shows little penetration to argue that on this subject our evidence can be merely negative—that we can at best say no more than that no sin is recorded of Him. We do not know the whole life-history of Socrates. Yet we know enough of him to be sure that he was not the man to become wilfully and contentedly the victim of a sophistical illusion. We do not know all that was said and done by Francis of Assisi. Yet we know enough of him to be sure that he was not actuated in his choice of a career by sordid or selfish motives. Francis might very well be described as a 'semi-mythical Italian'. Yet there is ample ground nevertheless for the high estimation in which our generation has learned to hold him. We have similar grounds for confidence in regard to the character of Jesus, even though we may distrust in some parts the narratives

of His life. No one could well seem more conscious than He of the facts of human sin. No one has done so much to bring that consciousness home to the minds of others. Yet while all those who have learned of Him appear to be above all things penitents, Jesus appears as something essentially different from a penitent. It has been well said that—taking Him as the Synoptists describe Him—we see in Him none of the scars of conflict, none of those marks of past warfare with evil habits which are conspicuous on the souls of all who have waged the battle with alternating success and failure. Could He have spoken with that serene self-confidence which we observe in Him—could He so unquestioningly have exalted Himself above His followers as their Master—if He had been haunted by the fear that as He had erred in one direction in the past, so He might err in other directions in the future? Could He, being the frank, candid, right-minded teacher which we find Him to be, have claimed for Himself the position in the Kingdom of God which there seems to be evidence that He did claim, if He had been conscious that He had not been always strictly loyal to the commands of the Father?

It is in a spirit of candour like His own that all such questions should be met. If we have once really perceived wherein the distinctiveness of the Christian method of salvation lies we may approach these further problems without haste and without fear: for those who practise His method have already become His disciples.

## CHAPTER XI

## EVANGELICALISM

LET us now pause to notice the results at which we have arrived. Relying solely on arguments which are independent of supernatural assumptions, we have discovered the unique power of the Christian religion to deliver mankind from guilt: and we have seen how the claims of Christianity are associated with the personal claims of Jesus Christ.

It will also have become evident that these truths can never be grasped in their full significance till they become something more than mere ethical and historical judgments. Conviction, if it is to become religious, must become in a peculiar sense personal. Intelligent assent to the Kantian ethics, for example, is not the same thing as effective conviction of sin. To 'take the sinner's place', with humility and contrition, is an act of the will as well as of the intellect.

If, then, we are to pursue our present method as a serious search for religious truth, we must turn to the schools of personal piety and seek to learn and apply their lessons.

There is, in especial, much to be learned from Evangelicalism. Evangelical teaching has been greatly mis-

understood. It is condemned as a form of ignorant emotionalism and Bibliolatry. It is even suspected of a tendency towards antinomianism.

That these suspicions are unjust may be readily seen by any one who will acquaint himself with Evangelical practices and literature: and it is in the popular literature of Evangelicalism that the clearest documentary evidence on this subject is to be found.

So far as reliance on emotion is concerned, modern Evangelicalism is in perpetual protest against it. We are saved—it teaches—not by feeling but by 'believing' —by 'taking God at His word.'[1]

But, as it would be a mistake to suppose that Evangelicalism relies on emotions, so it would be an equal mistake to conclude from these expressions that it places salvation in orthodox belief, or in a blind reliance on the letter of Scripture. 'Believing that Jesus died' says

[1] See, for example, *Sacred Songs and Solos*, no. 514.

> 'Cease of fitness to be thinking;
> Do not longer try to feel:
> It is *trusting*, and not *feeling*,
> That will give the Spirit's seal.'

The italics are in the original. Sankey's *Sacred Songs* has become the standard hymn-book of Evangelicalism. Cf. no. 278 in the same collection:

> 'Weeping will not save me,
> Though my face were bathed in tears.'

The test of 'feeling' is essentially a quantitative test: and, as every one acquainted with the language of Evangelical discourses must know, the reliance upon *quantity* of emotion, even upon quantity of faith, is sternly discouraged by this school. Such phrases may be heard as that 'it is not the quantity of our faith which saves us, but its object.' Cf. no. 193 which speaks of 'trusting when our faith is small'. 'Build up yourselves on your most holy faith—not on your most happy feeling' (Figgis. *Christ and Full Salvation*, p. 206). See p. 136 below.

a well-known tract [1] 'will save nobody: it is simply a matter of history.' 'The reason why Christianity has not made more rapid advance' says another tract [2] 'is because the people are asked to believe too many things. One half the things a man is expected to believe in order to reach heaven have no more to do with his salvation than the question how many volcanoes there are in the moon, or how far apart from each other are the rings of Saturn. I believe ten thousand things; but none of them have anything to do with my salvation except these two—that I am a sinner and that Christ came to save me.'

Still more outspoken is the following passage from a published address by Dr. Torrey. 'I said to him "John: you ought to accept Christ." He said "Well: I don't believe as you do. I don't believe in God or in your Bible." "But" I said "John, that does not make any difference. If you will take Jesus Christ as your Saviour, He will save you".'

The fact is that—though the word 'moral' is avoided because of its association with the doctrine of justification by works—the 'one thing needful' which Evangelicalism demands, whether this is spoken of as 'repentance' 'obedience' 'faith' 'trust' or 'surrender of the will to God', is always conceived as in the fullest sense a moral act. Where morality is dissociated—as it is by Kant—from the 'doctrine of works' altogether, and where it is

[1] '*The difference between history and faith.*' See *The Traveller's Guide* (London, S. Partridge & Co., 230th thousand, p. 32).

[2] '*Two things necessary for salvation.*' p. 40 of the same collection.

made to consist in the rightness of the Will, a view of morality results which not only would be accepted by Evangelicals at once, if they understood the terms in which it is propounded, but which actually expresses the very essence of their own view.[1]

A sufficient proof of what is here asserted may be found in the use of the term 'backsliding'—which in Evangelical usage implies always a moral lapse and not a doctrinal one[2]—and in the doctrine of 'Conversion'.

[1] The hymn quoted above—no. 514 in Sankey's *Sacred Songs*—speaks of 'choice', 'decision' and 'yielding' as well as of 'trusting'. 'Let your will to God be given'. Cf. *The Keswick Convention*, edited by C. F. Harford (Keswick House, E.C.) p. 34. 'Can it indeed be true that Thou hast not only *promised*, but *commanded* this? For Thy command seems to me to involve, if possible, even a stronger assurance than Thy promise.' This thought is assuredly not borrowed from Kant directly or indirectly. But this fact only makes the agreement the more impressive.

[2] See *Traveller's Guide*, p. 12. 'He who accepts Christ has to obey Christ. He who says "I believe" and yet lives in sin is a liar.' On the very same page occur the words 'Men are punished by God, not because they have led a wicked life, but for one sin, unbelief in Christ' (John iii. 18). Then follow (in entire accordance with St. John iii. 19. '*This* is the judgment' etc.) the words quoted above. Thus if from such statements as that 'we are punished for unbelief only' (cf. *Traveller's Guide* p. 40 'You must beware of resting your peace on your feelings, convictions, tears, repentance, prayers, duties or resolutions. You must *begin* with receiving Christ, and not make that the termination of a course of fancied preparation') the conclusion were drawn that Evangelicalism teaches the antinomian doctrine of justification by orthodox belief, this conclusion would be due to taking these sentences out of their context. This, however, is just what the critics of Evangelicalism have habitually done.

Cf. Rom. vi. 2, 15; iii. 8. It is only when we have perceived *why* it is that the Pauline teaching slides so naturally into antinomianism that we are in a position to understand the former.

In defending 'sudden conversions' the late Mr. Moody pertinently argued that to ask a man to renounce his sins partially and not entirely, for fear that a total renunciation should make too sudden a change in his habits, was contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.[1] In truth, an act of will must in the nature of things be 'sudden'. A decision good or bad may have been prepared for by the experiences of a lifetime; but to take the decision is, when we come to the point, the work of a moment. But, even if Mr. Moody's argument were unsound, it suffices to explain the teaching of his school.[2]

[1] Another preacher asked, in the same connexion, whether we were to require the professional thief gradually to reduce the number of his daily thefts, lest the total change of habits should be too much for him.

[2] Cf. the following passage from Mr. Moody's pamphlet *The way to God*, p. 39. 'Notice how the Scripture puts it—"Except a man be born again" "born from above" "born of the Spirit". From amongst a number of other passages where we find this word "EXCEPT", I would just name three. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. *They all really mean the same thing.*'

This assertion that the 'new birth', 'conversion' and 'repentance' are the 'same thing' may be compared with Bunyan's declaration that 'believing and coming are all one' (*Pilgrim's Progress*, Part I, near the end). Bunyan,—whose influence on English Evangelicalism has been powerful and continuous—teaches that he that 'comes, that is, runs out in his heart and affections after salvation by Christ, he indeed believes in Christ.'

This passage is especially worthy of being reflected on by those to whom the identification of Evangelical 'faith' with the Kantian 'good will' is a hard saying. It may be taken in connexion with Dr. Torrey's remark that a lack of belief in God 'does not make any difference'. What else can this whole-

Now—since we are concerned here with the case of those who believe in Duty but not in God—it is necessary for our present purpose to distinguish carefully between Evangelical doctrine and Evangelical method. Evangelicalism rests explicitly upon the witness of spiritual experience. What, then,—when we eliminate those doctrinal presuppositions which colour its language—does the experience of Evangelicalism teach?

This question can be answered intelligently by each individual, so far, and so far only, as his own experience carries him. Yet there is an impressive uniformity in the phrases which are found by different men to be the natural expression of their own spiritual history, in the sense they attach to these phrases, and in the conclusions they draw from them. Again and again, for example, in one generation after another, men recur to the Scriptural phrase which speaks of the 'peace which passes all understanding.'

Thus we find, first, that those who practise the Christian method of whole-hearted surrender of the will to God's Law, experience a peace, a rest, a satisfaction of soul, which

hearted desire for salvation through Christ, which Bunyan describes, be supposed to be, except a genuine willingness to follow His commandments? When we have once perceived that Evangelicalism lays the chief stress neither on orthodox belief nor on the strength of the emotions, on what can it be supposed to be laying stress except on the rightness of the will? And what can be the meaning of the language about 'total self-surrender' etc., except to teach such an act of *universal* submission to the Law as Kant demands? Compare the common distinction between *remorse* (which is sorrow for a particular sin) and *repentance* (which is renunciation of sin in general).

is different in kind from all other happiness. In mere quantity of pleasurable emotion other kinds of happiness may surpass it. 'The satisfaction of being well-dressed' said a worldly-minded woman 'is greater than any joy which the consolations of religion can bestow.' That worldly satisfactions may be quantitatively greater than spiritual peace of mind is the experience of many who are in a position to compare them. Hence arises the power of temptation. But spiritual peace is felt to be in a special sense 'from above'. It cannot be reckoned with other pleasures, or judged by the same hedonistic standard. It is a satisfaction which goes down to the depths of our being. Its essence is that—in Kantian language—it is 'rational'.

That the individual may in this matter be under an illusion must be admitted. There are cases in which we may suspect that the real causes of a happiness which professes to be spiritual are chiefly mundane: that it results from an equable temperament, a good digestion, an assured income. But experience will show that, by genuine self-surrender, a peace of mind may be attained which survives all changes both of mood and of circumstances.

Secondly, this special peace of mind is found to be associated with Christ, and this not only in the minds of those who start with an *à priori* belief in His divinity. In the case of many men there can be no question—as all mission-preachers know well—that the doctrine is based upon the experience, and not the experience upon the doctrine. We find Jesus to be God, because we have first known His peace to be the 'peace of God which passes all understanding'. With others the experience is clear and

indubitable without ever leading them to the doctrine at all. No one, for example, has ever known better than Mr. Matthew Arnold did,—hostile though he was to dogmatic theology—that it is 'no grand performance or discovery of a man's own' that can 'bring him to joy and peace, but an attachment—the influence of One full of grace and truth; an influence which we feel we know not how, and which subdues us we know not when, which, like the wind, breathes where it lists'.[1]

Thirdly, the peace of Christ is so unlike all other known pleasures, both in its character and its conditions, that to the simple mind it appears miraculous and supernatural: something which reason cannot define nor philosophy explain.[2] Indeed this fact has given rise at times to misleading phraseology, which in its turn has been made the excuse for really erroneous teaching. The work of God in the soul has been distinguished so sharply from the efforts of the sinner himself,—and it has been represented as so much beyond his comprehension—as to suggest a quiescence both of the understanding and of the will, like that which characterizes the worst forms of quietistic Mysticism.[3] Just as for Kant the

[1] *Literature and Dogma*, chap. viii. 1.

[2] Cf. Moody's *The Way to God*, pp. 51–52. Such language as this of Mr. Moody's is often quoted to prove that Evangelicalism regards God's dealings as absolutely arbitrary—as having in them nothing either rational or moral. The language must be judged by its context.

[3] One danger which follows from such language is well indicated by a modern writer who describes in a brilliant passage the deathbed of the great Pitt.

"He was attended" he says "by a worldly-minded prelate who talked to him in the conventional style about 'the Saviour' and his own unblemished life, with the result that, were not the

Moral Law is mysterious (in that it proceeds from the hidden 'noumenal' self), and simple (in that abstraction is made of all special motives), so Evangelical preachers describe the method of salvation as at once simple and inexplicable. They bid us to turn away from the various means, and the various efforts, by which the natural man seeks for righteousness, and to adopt an attitude which appears to be purely passive[1] and negative.

The criticisms to which both the Kantian and the Evangelical teaching lie open are obvious. A law, it may be truly said, which has no definite 'content' is no law at all. The Evangelical teaching if followed quite literally would lead to absolute indolence.

Yet such language—though peculiarly liable to be misunderstood—expresses a genuine fact of observation. When the man who has been oppressed by 'thronging duties' finds sudden victory and peace in the mere abstract willingness to do whatsoever God may command the change produces sometimes an almost bewildering

scene so tragic, it would provoke a smile. After listening to these topics, Mr. Pitt is said to have raised himself and said: 'I must confess that I have completely neglected religion during my life, being so much taken up with politics. *But,*' he added, lifting up his arms, 'I throw myself *entirely* on the merits of my Saviour.' The Bishop reports this with infinite satisfaction, as shewing clearly that his friend was now 'all right'. Repentance, it will be seen, or satisfaction, or self-humiliation, was not thought of. Poor Mr. Pitt had simply consented to transfer his case entirely to other guardianship. He had made this handsome acknowledgment without reserve, and was at rest." See *Death Jewels* by Percy Fitzgerald (Burns and Oates). We can only remark—*Corruptio optimi pessima.*

[1] Such expressions are used as '*Just* trust in God,' '*Just* believe His promise,' '*Just* leave yourself in His hands.' To the question 'What have I to do?' the answer is given 'You have

impression of vacancy.[1] This state of mind is peculiarly difficult to describe for the enlightenment of others. Yet it may well be said that those who have never known the experience in which the mere 'form' of the Law or the Divine Will isolates itself from all particular aims and motives, have missed one of the most precious experiences of our religion. This experience, however, is obviously not dependent upon any particular form of theological belief.

If then the reader will really take the trouble to examine for himself those facts of Christian experience which are dealt with under the above three headings (especially the former two, and here one possibility of experiment at least lies open to him) he will find enough uniformity to justify him in speaking—in a quite scientific sense—of the 'law' or 'laws' which Evangelical experience makes known to us. It is a uniform 'law' that the whole-hearted surrender of the will to the obedience of Christ is followed by the unique sense of peace which has been described.

A further question, however, still remains. If we

nothing to do.' Again the method by which peace is found has been compared to the method by which one may learn to float upon water. 'You will not float' it is said 'till you cease to struggle, till you cease to make efforts to save yourself, till you remain quite passive and are willing to trust to the mere buoyancy of the sea.' The spiritual value of such language is not disproved by the mere fact (see first note to chap. xii.) that it can be misunderstood and perverted.

[1] Cf. the peculiar sense of 'lightness' which Newman pictures as belonging to the redeemed soul newly delivered from the body. *Dream of Gerontius*, II.

recognize that these laws exist, what character are we to assign to them?

A comparison has been drawn between 'the phenomena of religious emotion even in its highest form' and those 'of hypnotism, of neurosis, and of the effects of nitrous oxide'. It has been argued that 'the development of all these is governed by the same psychological laws'.[1] From this position it is no great step to the suggestion that the 'laws' of the spiritual life are merely the uniformities which belong to a particular type of the neurotic temperament.

Now even to those who know the Christian religion from without only, the theory which regards the sense of sin and reconciliation as a neurotic illusion can hardly seem to possess much probability. The moral results of these convictions are familiar: and they are seldom such as to suggest either delusion or weakness of mind. But the test to which alone we can appeal with absolute confidence is the test of personal practice. As the man of reasonably good life knows, if he will reflect upon it, that there are moral laws before which he not merely feels guilty, but is so: so the normally constituted man who whole-heartedly seeks to take Christ's yoke upon him will attain not merely an emotional sense of relief from guilt, but the conviction that this sense of innocence justly belongs to him.

In other words, he will learn that in Christian experience we have to do, not merely with valid pathological generalizations, but with laws which, in quite another manner, are valid for every rational being as such.

[1] Lord Haldane remarks that Prof. James has 'shown' that this is so. Would not 'brilliantly maintained' be a juster expression? See *Pathway to Reality* (first series), pp. 5, 6.

## CHAPTER XII

## THE KESWICK SCHOOL

IF this is true of the experiences already mentioned it is true equally of those special experiences which are associated with the School of Thought which takes its name from the Keswick Convention.

We are concerned with Evangelicalism here in one special aspect only. The Keswick School deserves, in fact, a far fuller treatment than belongs to the present argument. In the time of Jerome the Church was not ashamed to seek instruction in the wilds of little Bethlehem. The learned theology of to-day (though the parallel is not complete) might gather far more good than it is prepared to expect at the shores of the Cumbrian lake.[1]

[1] Keswick has never been slow to acknowledge its debt to external sources. Yet Mr. Figgis is clearly right when he states that the Keswick teaching 'is not Quietism', with which it is sometimes compared. This may be seen by comparing any of the Keswick books—especially Mr. Figgis' own *Christ and Full Salvation*—with the sixty-eight propositions (attributed to Michael de Molinos and condemned by Innocent XI in 1687) which may be regarded as the official definition of this heresy. Consider for example the following 'condemned' theses :—

1. Oportet hominem suas potentias annihilare, et haec est vita interna.
2. Velle operari active, est deum offendere, qui vult esse ipse solus agens.
4. . . . Deus operari vult in nobis sine nobis.
7. Non debet anima cogitare nec de praemio, nec de punitione,

The Keswick Convention addresses itself to those who are already 'the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus,' and bids them press on to 'full growth',[1] to 'fulness of blessing,'—bids them seek uninterrupted communion with God and 'victory over all known sin.'[2]

The central tenet of the school is that, as Justification is by Faith, so Sanctification is by Faith also. Its aim is to prove that 'holiness of life is possible in a stricter sense of the words than is commonly admitted in the Christian Churches', that a 'life of faith and victory, of peace and rest' is the 'rightful heritage of the child of God, into which he may step not by the laborious ascent of some *Scala Sancta*, not by long prayers and laborious effort,' but by a 'deliberate and decisive act of faith':[3] that though sinless perfection is beyond our reach in this world, still 'the normal experience of the child of God should be one of victory instead of constant defeat, one of liberty instead of grinding bondage, one of perfect peace instead of restless anxiety.'[4]

If this is the result aimed at, what is to be the method?

nec de paradiso, nec de inferno, nec de morte, nec de aeternitate.

10. Si propriis defectibus alios scandalizet, non est necessarium reflectere, dummodo non adsit voluntas scandalizandi. . . .

13. Sicut non debent a Deo aliquam rem petere, ita nec illi ob aliquam gratias agere debent; quia utrumque est actus propriae voluntatis.

44. Job blasphemavit, et tamen non peccavit labiis suis: quia fuit ex daemonis violentia. Cf. 49, 42.

[1] *The Keswick Convention. Its Message, Its Method and its Men*, p. 5. See also an annual publication, *The Keswick Week* (Marshall Brothers).

[2] *Keswick Convention*, p. 26.

[3] P. 6. [4] P. 6.

The answer is, in a word, 'complete surrender of will.'[1] This is the method, and the sole method. The very same act of will which brings the sinner to forgiveness brings him also—if all its implications are fully thought out—to victory: and it is just the thinking out of these implications with which the Keswick teachers are chiefly concerned. This 'one decisive act' of self-surrender needs to be applied day by day to all questions of conduct as they arise.

In describing this decisive act, the greatest care has been taken by the Keswick speakers and writers to avoid every appearance of fanaticism. They use no language which represents the 'decisive step' as a great psychological upheaval—least of all as a miraculous deliverance from future temptations.[2] In what then does the distinctive character of this teaching consist?

The characteristic doctrine of modern Evangelicalism that salvation depends upon one great decision, that we need but 'one step'—'out of self, into Christ'—is here applied to the details of conduct. Men are called to trust, not in habits or methods or rules, but in God—to meet each moment's temptation in direct reliance on the present power of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Keswick School arose 'as the immediate consequence of a true definition of sin'.[3] Thus the essence of the matter is that every separate decision should be brought directly under the highest moral category—that every deliberate act be thought of as God's command. In such a view of life there is no room for 'counsels' or 'per-

[1] *K.C.*, p. 27, 'Renunciation of Discerned Evil,' cf. p. 11.
[2] p. 69.
[3] *Keswick Convention*, p. 80.

missions': every individual act, so far as it is legitimate at all, is viewed as falling under a 'precept':[1] every act of the Christian should be an act of faith, since whatsoever is not of faith is sin. No one advises, of course, that all automatic and quasi-automatic actions should be eliminated from our conduct, or that every single minute act in our behaviour should be reflected upon at the moment of its performance, and brought explicitly and directly into relation with the divine law. Such minute self-recollection would be neither desirable nor possible. Yet since God's Law—the Voice of God's Spirit—is conceived as being ever at hand to be referred to, it is therefore our duty to refer our conduct to it, not only for the general ordering of our course of life, but also whenever temptation or serious doubt arises.

The Keswick teaching carries us, therefore, somewhat deeper than the common discussions about habit and free will. 'I ought: therefore I can.' If a given act is plainly recognized by me, not merely as in a general way right and desirable, but as personally enjoined upon me by God, and to be done here and now, then not only can I do it, but—so long as my mind remains perfectly clear on the subject—I cannot forbear to do it. 'Let a man' said Law[2] 'but have so much piety as to intend to please God in all the actions of his life, and then he will never swear more. It will be as impossible for him to swear, whilst he feels this intention within himself, as it is impossible for a man that intends to please his prince, to go up and abuse him to his face.' Deliberately to disobey God to His face is a thing as much out of the Christian's

[1] Figgis, *Christ and Full Salvation*, p. 55. For the Roman doctrine see *Summa Theol. Prima secundae*, Qu. cviii.

[2] *Serious Call*, chap. ii.

power as it is out of any man's power to set deliberately about undoing the work of his life upon which his whole heart is set. If then we can contrive that certain actions shall not be done in the dark—that they shall be brought out into the full light, so that if done they must be done deliberately—then they will not be done at all, and we shall have the victory we desire.[1]

'But, suppose the testimony of the Keswick teachers is accepted, has it any value for our present purpose? Can the inward experiences of victory over sin be detached from their setting of doctrinal belief?' It is clear, of course, that the attempt to state the Keswick method and the Keswick experience in such abstract and impersonal terms as belong, say, to the religious phraseology of Mr. Matthew Arnold—to speak of the 'Eternal' rather than of God with the definite intention of avoiding the implication of Personality—must result in a serious impoverishment of language. And for those who themselves possess the belief in God to adopt such a change in their own thought and speech as a mere psychological experiment would be an act of reprehensible wantonness.

[1] The chief danger, indeed, of this School is not from the side of Quietism but from that of Rigorism. Though doubtless right in rejecting the Roman distinction between divine 'precepts' and divine 'counsels', it has certainly something to learn from the Roman Moral Theology on the subject of the 'doubtful conscience'. The principle that 'whatsoever is not of faith is sin' is the very basis of whole-hearted service. The confusion between this principle and the Rigorist doctrine, which treats everything which is 'speculatively' doubtful as 'practically' wrong, is a confusion which may well be called deadly in its consequences: and it is a confusion into which more than one school of English piety has been in danger of falling. See p. 203.

Yet, if the power of whole-hearted self-surrender is indeed what the Keswick School has affirmed it to be, does it not follow that the principle which can not only overcome ordinary temptations and anxieties, but can be victorious also 'where faith is small', may still exert its power even in the total eclipse of doctrinal belief? To bring our sins to Christ 'for Him to deal with' involves not merely that we should think of Him and them in some vague connexion, but that, from moment to moment, we should think of each wrong act as definitely forbidden, and each right act as definitely enjoined, by His law. Therefore, as knowledge of His law is compatible with an absence of the usual Christian beliefs about His person, it cannot be impossible for those who believe in Duty but not in God to apply the Keswick method in practice.

Nor should this be regarded by them as a mere experiment.[1] For those who have perceived the binding character of Christ's law upon the conscience, the duty of bringing this law to bear upon each successive detail of conduct is clear: and no doctrinal unbelief is any excuse for evading this obligation. With regard to that which is within one's own control the will may be in active harmony with the 'Law of God' even though it be not called by this name: with regard to that which is outside one's own control, there may be an absence of rebellion, a passive acquiescence,—if not because of the conviction that all is for the best, then because of the conviction that it is forbidden to the disciple of Jesus to disturb his peace by vain struggles against that which he cannot

[1] A mark of the whole Evangelical school has been the abundance of personal testimonies. On this special aspect of the Keswick influence which is here referred to, personal testimony is not lacking.

alter. And just as the experience of justification is independent of strong emotion—just as we find that it is a law of our inner life that the right will, even apart from emotional penitence, brings the assurance that the soul is under 'no condemnation'[1]—so here it will be found to be a law, 'valid for every rational being' who seriously adopts this method, that—quite apart from the delight and happiness which a clear faith in God's providence can add—there is for those who bring all their life in minute detail to be regulated by the command of Christ, not merely a growing sense of inward innocence, but also the knowledge that they are in contact with a source of moral strength which can never fail.

[1] Rom. viii. 1.

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE RITSCHLIAN REVOLUTION

DURING the brief survey of Evangelical methods which we have just completed, we have seen how we learn in the practices of piety the laws of the spiritual life—laws as valid in their own sphere 'as the laws of thought or the laws of nature.'[1]

But can these laws be systematically stated? And when so stated can they form the basis of a theology?

To a Christian apologetic which relies on moral intuition and experience alone this question is, of course, vital: and the best way, perhaps, to answer it is to examine that school of thought—in some respects the most characteristic movement of modern times—which took its rise from Kant's formulation of the 'Moral Proof of God's Existence'.

The chief difference between the theological method of Kant and that of his predecessors may be summarized in a sentence. While the older rationalism—best known through the Argument from Design—*infers* the existence of God *from* the phenomena of the world, Kant *finds* religious assurance *in* the exercise of moral freedom.

[1] Ritschl, *Die Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung and Versöhnung*, vol. iii. p. 587 (English translation p. 622).

Our Moral Reason—he argues [1]—bids us aim at the highest good. We cannot reject this command without becoming contemptible in our own sight. But the highest good—as Kant conceives it—consists in the happiness of all moral beings so far as they possess fitness [2] to be happy. If, however, there is no God and no future life, this highest good is incapable of realization. But can our moral reason bid us aim at what we know to be a mere chimera? Obviously not. To aim at what admittedly cannot be realized is a plainly irrational act. Therefore—Kant concludes—the attitude of the really moral man is inconsistent with religious unbelief.

We must not confuse this argument with others which have a similar sound. It is not—as Professor Huxley thought [3]—an attempt to 'found' morality upon the assumption of a future life. For Kant morality needed no such foundation. On the contrary, he founds the hope of a future life upon morality.[4] Reason bids him aim at the *summum bonum*. That this is a rational command he cannot doubt. But reason cannot say 'Attempt the impossible: tilt at what you know to be a windmill.' Therefore Kant cannot regard the *summum bonum* as a mere creature of fancy. 'The belief in God', he says [5] 'and in another world, is so interwoven with

[1] *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* § 87, etc, (*Critique of Judgment*, translated by J. H. Bernard, D.D., Macmillan, 1892).

[2] 'Worthiness' to be happy suggests to the English reader a Pharisaic 'doctrine of works'. For Kant the 'worthiness' is the result not of good *works* but of good *will*.

[3] See Huxley's *Hume*, p. 180.

[4] See *Urtheilskraft*, 424 note.

[5] *Critique of Pure Reason*, Meiklejohn's translation p. 502 (German paging 857).

my moral nature that the former can no more vanish than the latter can ever be torn from me.'

The first impression produced by this argument is often unfavourable. It reads like a piece of sophistry. Yet it has an odd way of returning upon the mind which thinks it has rejected it: and the passages in the *Critique of Judgment* [1] which deal with it are well worth careful study.

Our chief concern here, however, is not with this argument for its own sake, but with the general method of religious apology of which it is the first systematic example. Kant's chief service to religion is his distinction between the Practical and the Speculative Reason; and his insistence that it is through the Practical—i.e. the Moral—Reason alone that we can either know God or approach Him.[2] On this distinction and on this principle a great school of theology has been founded. The mantle of Kant has fallen upon Ritschl: and Ritschl has carried out the Kantian method more successfully in some respects than Kant himself.

The third volume of Ritschl's *Justification and Reconciliation* [3]—though not free from philosophical defects—may reasonably be regarded as the greatest religious book of our time. Its main contention is that Christianity cannot be understood except through those experiences which are specifically Christian—'justification' and 'reconciliation with God through Christ'.

[1] § 87, etc.

[2] See *Crit. of Judg.* § 89 (Bernard, p. 393). See also *Die Religion innerhalb* etc. Viertes Stück Zweiter Theil. § 2. Alles was, etc. See also same section (§ 2) near the end.

[3] *Die Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung.*

Ritschl refuses therefore to explain justification by legal analogies.[1] Indeed he rejects from Christian theology all arguments which[2] are 'purely rational'—that is, all arguments (such as the Argument from Design) which are intelligible apart from a distinctive Christian experience. 'Whoso willeth to do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine.'[3] 'We are able,' says Ritschl 'to know and understand God, sin, conversion, eternal life in the Christian sense, only so far as we consciously and intentionally reckon ourselves members of the community which Christ has founded.'[4]

Thus knowledge of God is attained by an act of Will,[5] and is quite independent of the usual 'arguments for God's existence', which Ritschl distrusts.[6] So far as we subordinate ourselves to Christ, we gain the experience of 'reconciliation'[7]—the sense of being justified by the very law against which we have offended. In reconciliation we enjoy a sense of 'lordship over the world.'[8]

[1] Vol. iii. p. 84, etc. (English trans. p. 86).

[2] P. 5 (E.T. 5).

[3] St. John vii. 17. See Ritschl, vol. iii. p. 8 (Eng. trans. p. 8).

[4] P. 4 (Eng. trans. p. 4).

[5] Ritschl's language is more *explicitly* Christian than Kant's: and he holds that unlike Kant he is not 'founding the Christian religion upon morality' (see p. 215 note, E.T. p. 226). But he is at one with Kant in making religion a matter primarily of the *will* not of the *intellect*: in basing religious knowledge upon acts of obedience, and judgments of value—judgments which have 'spiritual' as distinct from 'intellectual' worth, since they cannot be attained by cold reasoning alone without some goodness of heart.

[6] P. 17 (E.T. 17); p. 203, etc. (E.T. 214, etc.).

[7] P. 132 (E.T. 139) etc., etc.

[8] P. 308 (E.T. 326) etc., etc.

And this is associated with trust in God, in the sense that 'the activity of God becomes to us a matter of conviction through the attitude we take up to the world as religious men.' [1]

This general position is developed by Ritschl in detail by means of his well-known doctrine of the Judgment of Value (*Werthurtheil*). 'Value-judgments' of a sort are implied in all knowledge; since without a belief in its value—without 'interest'—'we do not trouble ourselves about anything.'[2] But while in science the judgment of value is a mere 'concomitant', in religion it is the heart of the matter.[3] 'Religious knowledge [4] moves in independent value-judgments, which relate to man's attitude to the world, and call forth feelings of pleasure or pain, in which man either enjoys the dominion over the world vouchsafed him by God, or feels grievously the lack of God's help to that end.'

Is Ritschl, then, drawing the simple distinction between 'judgments of value' and 'judgments of fact' with which recent discussion has made us familiar? Does he teach that religion is not concerned with facts but with ideals only—that if God is an ennobling conception it makes no matter whether He is real? that in asserting that a belief is true we mean no more than that it is edifying? In a word, is Ritschl a Pragmatist?

[1] P. 207. In the English trans. (p. 218), the force of the contrast between *Wirklichkeit* and *Wirksamkeit* is necessarily lost.

[2] P. 195 (E. Tr. 204).

[3] P. 195 (E. Tr. 204), and therefore 'independent' (*selbständig*).

[4] P. 195 (E. Tr. 205). The words 'or it may be'—in the English translation on page 205, line 3—are slightly misleading.

Assuredly not. The teaching of Ritschl is so essentially different from Pragmatism that it is strange they should ever have been confused.[1] It is impossible to read him with care without at once perceiving that he feels his religious knowledge to be in its own sphere 'absolute', and also to be a knowledge of what 'is' as well as of what 'ought to be'. He believes in the reality of guilt, in the reality of justification.[2] Indeed he even falls foul of the particular way in which Kant states that great fundamental distinction which has entered so deeply into Ritschl's own thought—the distinction between Speculative and Practical Reason. Knowledge of the laws of our action, he points out, is itself 'speculative': it is 'theoretical knowledge, the knowledge of the laws of our spiritual life.'[3]

The difference which Ritschl finds between theoretical knowledge and religious knowledge is concerned not with the character of the objects known—since in both cases the object is the world[4]—but with the different way in which the world is regarded by science and religion respectively.[5] He compares the 'certainty of

[1] 'Truth' says Prof. James (*Pragmatism*, p. 77) 'is what it would be better for us to believe.' 'An idea is true' (p. 75) 'so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives.' The Professor desired, no doubt, by these paradoxical utterances to call attention to certain neglected aspects of philosophic truth. His statements, none the less, are, as they stand, absurd. It may be good for an intending thief—it may be 'profitable for his life'—to believe that he is watched by the police. But it is not necessarily true.

[2] See e.g. p. 31, line 20, etc. (E. Tr. p. 31 bottom).

[3] 211 (E. Tr. 222) cf. note on p. 215 (E.T. 226). These two passages alone are sufficient defence against the imputation of Pragmatism.

[4] See p. 193 (E.T. 203).

[5] See p. 587 (E.T. 622). The usual religious doctrine of Provi-

divine providence' with the 'certainty of our own existence'. 'To become certain of our own Ego we do not need a scientific analysis of its grounds and conditions, or an empirical explanation of its origin.' We know it by the exercise—or by the restriction—of our 'independent activity.'[1] Similarly 'we believe in divine Providence, not because we can follow or demonstrate its course clearly and completely, in other words, objectively,'[2] but because of those 'voluntary activities in which man appropriates the operations of God.'[3] The most influential beliefs are not always those which are scientifically clearest.[4] Just as, for example, I may have no scientific knowledge of the exact proportion between the strength of my horse's muscles and the strength of my own will-power and yet may be absolutely sure that I can master him—just as a British Pro-Consul may have no exact estimate of the forces with which he will have to contend and yet may be quite confident in the ultimate triumph of the Imperial Power—so apart from any scientific theory as to providential methods, 'faith in divine providence' is the 'normal tone of feeling' of the Christian, and may be compared with the unscientific but justifiable self-confidence with which a strong man meets his antagonists.[5] Clearly such 'judgments of value' are partly 'judgments of fact'.

dence says—'I am *intended* by my Creator to triumph over the obstacles that oppose me.' A high-minded Agnosticism would say 'The rational interests of man are *worthy* to triumph over these obstacles.' Ritschl's attitude lies between the two. 'I am sure that, as a member of Christ's redeemed community, I shall be *able* to triumph over them.'

[1] Pp. 587, 588 (E.T. 622).
[2] P. 587.
[3] Pp. 33–34 (E.T. 34).
[4] P. 587.
[5] Pp. 588, etc. (E.T. 622, etc.).

The confusion of Ritschl with the Pragmatists has tended, in fact, to obscure the issue. *Pectus facit theologum.* The very pith of the Ritschlian thought is summed up in this ancient saying; of which Ritschl has for the first time made a really consistent application. Theology, he holds, is a matter of 'will' and 'character' rather than of 'intellect'. Religious knowledge is to be attained, not by cold reasoning but by personal religious experience. Our standing before God depends not on our belief in the 'mystery of Christ's Two Natures'[1] but on our voluntary attitude towards Him and the Redeemed Community of which He is the Founder.

It is quite in accordance with these conceptions that Ritschl directs his chief polemic against the 'objective method'. We cannot write a satisfactory theology in the form of a 'narrative'[2]—a mere 'record of the great deeds done by God.' 'The more objectively the truths of Christianity are handed down in narrative form, the closer at hand will doubt be found.'[3] And thus we are prepared for his assertion that there is no such thing as a 'disinterested knowledge of God':[4] that we can know God only by trusting Him:[5] that God and Christ can be known to man only through our discovery of their 'value for ourselves.'[6]

The usual Anglican criticism of this theology is that it is 'too subjective'. Catholicism—it is said—sees God in glory surrounded by saints and angels; Protestantism

[1] P. 370, etc. (E.T. p. 391, etc.).
[2] See pp. 33–34, etc., etc. (E.T. 34–35).
[3] P. 34 (E.T. 35).
[4] P. 202 (E.T. 212).
[5] P. 202 (E.T. 213).
[6] P. 202 (E.T. 212).

sees only its own sins and their forgiveness. Catholic worship, therefore, is a nobler thing, even in its most childish forms, than the Methodism which keeps its eye ever fixed upon its own navel.

This kind of criticism, sound enough in its proper place, is here beside the mark. We may admit that if Ritschl had had a deeper insight into the type of piety expressed in certain medieval hymns—which while 'objective' and even 'narrative' in form are passionately religious in spirit [1]—he might possibly have stated his meaning somewhat differently. But what he has at heart [2] is to insist that 'in theology, however coolly we may sketch out its formal relations, we have to do with spiritual processes of such a kind that our salvation depends on them.' It is plain that knowledge on such a subject cannot be disinterested; nor can it be gained by purely 'objective' methods. God is not known till He is reverenced: but in reverence we bring Him into relation with subjective feelings of our own.

If it is complained that Ritschl is 'too subjective' in his theory of knowledge, the accusation is partly true.[3] He did not wholly escape the prevalent tendencies of his time. But even this criticism is not much to the point; since Ritschl's theory of knowledge is incidental only. His interest is centred, not upon philosophy, but upon religion.

Against the confusion of his doctrine with Mysticism—though the mistake still continues to be made—Ritschl has himself sufficiently guarded us. That his religion is very far from being an 'amorous duet between the soul

[1] Cf. his remark on 'Egoism', p. 418 (E.T. 442).
[2] P. 34 (E.T. 35).
[3] P. 34 (E.T. 34).

and God', that he is jealously concerned for a recognition of the place of the redeemed community in the Christian life, is apparent in every chapter.

But in order to grasp the real significance of Ritschl's teaching, we need something more than a mere defence of it against criticism.

His special achievement has been to produce a school of Christian apologetic which makes its appeal to the typical modern man. The educated man of to-day—speaking roughly and broadly—disbelieves in miracles and distrusts metaphysics. In producing a theology which depends on neither, Ritschl has done, surely, a great service to his generation. And if the modern sceptic is partly right—if miraculous 'evidences' and philosophical 'proofs',[1] however valuable in themselves, are still secondary and not primary in religion—then Ritschl has done a service not to his own age alone but to mankind. On this view the supreme test of the value of his method will be in its application to doctrinal scepticism of an extreme kind.

[1] 1 Cor. i. 22.

## CHAPTER XIV

## RITSCHLIANISM AND CHRISTOLOGY

WHAT success, then, can the Ritschlian method have with those who believe in Duty but disbelieve in God?

The complete answer to this question can be learned in practice only. Yet the following remarks may serve to indicate the direction in which this answer is to be sought.

It is clear, in the first place, that much of our religious knowledge consists of 'judgments of value' in the simplest sense of the phrase: and is therefore quite independent of the dogmas of traditional religion.

Take, for example, the doctrine of Nature and Grace. The verification of this doctrine is open to all those who 'take Christ's yoke' upon them. In such whole-hearted submission, we shall assuredly learn to contrast the two rival impulses which will henceforth be at war within the soul. To ask, therefore, how it is possible to believe in 'grace' without believing in the God Who gives it, is to miss the point at issue. The matter of primary moment is neither the name by which this impulse is called, nor our theory as to its origin. The primary matter is to recognize its character; to distinguish the supreme conflict between Grace and Nature from

the conflicts—known even to the worldliest of Pagans—between impulses which are amiable and impulses which are less so. The Pagan contrast between 'things which are better' and 'things which are worse' cannot be transformed into Christian belief by merely ascribing the better impulses to God's gift. But when we come to see that, in the choice between the world and Christ, the contest is between darkness on the one hand and absolute light on the other—that here is the one supreme issue in comparison with which all else in the world is unimportant—this is a Christian judgment even in the total absence of any definite theological background.

It is true, secondly, that many religious beliefs which are commonly supposed to be 'judgments of fact' are in reality 'judgments of value'.

To ignore this is to do injustice to believer and unbeliever alike. Consider, for example, the doctrine of God's wrath and future punishment. To those who know religion from the outside only, the belief in a God Who is angry with the creatures of His hand, and has invented strange and arbitrary methods for His own appeasement,[1] seems—naturally enough—a mere survival of barbarian mythology. The believer, on the other hand, is apt to regard the unbeliever as lacking in moral seriousness. If we question those who insist upon the eternity of punishment, we can generally at once discover their motive. To deny that punishment is eternal involves in their minds the denial of the absoluteness of moral dis-

[1] 'Popular Christianity has for its central mystery an insane vengeance bought off by a trumpery expiation.' Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*. (*First aid to Critics. Christianity and Anarchism*).

tinctions; of the ultimate difference between obedience and rebellion. In other words, what seems to the unbeliever to be a judgment of fact, is—in the religious man's own mind—primarily a judgment of value.

If we regarded God as a 'person in history',[1] our religion would then indeed be the degraded mythology which the unbeliever thinks it. But to those who know religion from within, God is never a Person merely. Though the Christian loves to think of a divine Father into Whose ears he can pour his complaint, it is still true that his primary knowledge of God is through the Spirit. In other words we must know God first as a principle within us before we can profitably think of Him as a person outside of us.[2] This is the true order—as observation will show—even in the religion of the very simplest.

It is the knowledge of God as an inward Principle which alone gives religious meaning to the doctrine of God's wrath.[3] There are extreme expressions on this subject

[1] Loisy, *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 10.

[2] It is interesting to notice how many simple Christians—without the smallest desire to deny the personality of the Holy Ghost—do yet habitually follow the example of the English Bible (Rom. viii. 26) and speak of the Spirit in the neuter. Cf. Anselm's *Id quo nil majus cogitari potest.*

[3] For many believers in the eternity of punishment the doctrine seems to be hardly a 'judgment of fact' at all. They are affirming a principle: they are not really picturing a future event. To others who quite definitely accept Hell as a real place or state, it is still the principle—the heinousness of impenitent rebellion—which is most prominent in their minds. The principle seems sure, and belief in Hell seems its natural consequence. The difficulties, they feel, are for God to solve and not for them. The more, however, that the belief in eternal punishment becomes really—what it is professedly—a 'judgment of fact', the less likely is it to maintain its place in religion.

which we shall, no doubt, do well to avoid. To speak of Jesus as 'smoothing the angry Father's face' is unquestionably misleading. Yet to one who knows his guilt, and so has come under his *own* wrath, not even the extremest representation of the wrath of God will be unintelligible: while to those to whom conviction of sin is unknown, the Christian religion will be a mere mythology to the end. The wrath of a 'magnified non-natural man'—a Creator Who is at once too near and too far off, Who resembles us in personality and yet is bound to us by purely external relations—could only provoke just rebellion and unanswerable retorts.[1]

Consider, thirdly, the cases where judgments of value and judgments of fact are necessarily bound together. Along with the judgment of value which perceives the absolute claims of the impulse which we call Grace, goes the judgment of fact which perceives the power of this impulse in those who wholeheartedly take Jesus for their Master.

It is thus, then, that—without any reliance on supernatural dogmas, and without any excursion into metaphysics—we find ourselves in possession of the materials for the construction of a Christian theology: a theology which shall include a doctrine of Grace, a doctrine of Adoption—since no one who has fallen decisively under the influence of Christ can doubt that it is in some sense 'through Him'[2] that we ourselves come into a changed

[1] See Omar Khayyam, stanza 58.

[2] See Ritschl's contrast between the position of Jesus in Christianity and that of Gautama in Buddhism, pp. 364, 365, E.T. 385, 387.

relation with the Moral Law, a 'new birth', a 'new sonship'[1] which yet is never fully equal to that air of 'complete guiltlessness and filial relation with the Father' which appears to belong to Him 'by nature'[2]—and lastly a doctrine of God.

Though the 'personality of God' was an article of faith with Ritschl himself, it is not clear that this doctrine can be established by means of the characteristic principles of his system. This is unquestionably a serious admission. Yet it is well to bear in mind here the definition of God which satisfied so truly religious a man as St. Louis of France. To the definite question 'What is God?' he approved the answer 'God is so good a thing that there can be no better.' In this sense Christian experience—apart both from miracle and from philosophy—can bring us into assured contact with God. In reconciliation through penitence we attain a peace of mind, an inward self-respect, which we know to be above all price, and thus a contact with Something to Which—however else we may conceive it—we can ascribe absolute truth and supreme value.

The prevalence of the 'objective method' has really disguised from us the strength which the argument from experience possesses. Its value may be made clearer by a comparison. Imagine a painter replying to sceptical doubts as to the worth and reality of beauty; or a physicist defending the truth and value of his own branch of science. Both of them would rely in the last resort on

[1] For those who believe in no personal God, the words 'Sonship' and 'Adoption' will remain metaphors; but they may still describe a real and vivid experience.

[2] See chap. x. p. 91.

the certainty gained in long experience. Regarded as a piece of dialectic, their defence might be a very lame affair. Yet not even the acutest sceptic would really shake in them the convictions of a lifetime, or instil into their minds any doubt of the value of their results and the general correctness of their methods. In religion there grows up, in spite of frequent failure, a similar confidence in the worth and power of Grace—not the reasoned confidence of philosophy but the practical confidence of successful achievement. It is just this assurance of correctness and success which is the essential element in the 'happiness' which the simple believer is apt to allege as an evidence. In this he is following a sound instinct. The test of the rationality of a belief is its power to persist when it has been freely subjected to counter-suggestions or criticisms. We distinguish a sane belief from an obsession mainly by the capacity of the former to fit itself into the general scheme of our knowledge: to find a place in that view of the world which we share with other men.

Thus the final answer to those who doubt the Christian method must always lie in the advice to try it.[1] To the mere spectator, the desire to follow Christ may seem an idle fancy; a passing craze like the dreams of a stage-struck boy. But when we find by actual practice that it is something more solid than this, we shall then proceed further. Experience reveals not only values but facts. We shall find that innocence before the Moral Law is actually attainable. Not only is the law true; it is also an effective impulse towards its own fulfilment. In

[1] Even in the older Churches professions of Christian service will not always be rejected on the mere ground of doctrinal unbelief.

coming thus in contact with an inexhaustible source[1] of moral strength we shall not long doubt that we are in contact with God. Therefore the vital question is not whether this impulse is a Personal Being, but whether we are able to distinguish, among the various impulses to which we are subject, one which is absolutely true and right in its nature, and right by no mere chance or accident—such an impulse as it could never be lawful to resist.

There is a sense, however, in which the Ritschlian method brings us to a knowledge, not only of God, but of a God Who is 'personal': and no part of Ritschl's great treatise is worthy of more careful study than the chapters in which he maintains the divinity of Jesus Christ.

'The divinity of Our Lord'—it is sometimes objected—'which can be established on a basis of inward experience, will be a "moral divinity" at best.'

The question turns on what "moral divinity" means. If we merely call Jesus God by courtesy because He is the best of good men, the divine title has here no theological worth. But if we recognize His absolute supremacy in the moral sphere—in such a sense that we identify the 'Will of Jesus' with the 'Will of God'—we shall then not hesitate to 'honour the Son even as we honour the Father', and Jesus in the fullest sense of the words will have for us the 'value of God'. *Magna ars est scire con-*

[1] All that 'experience' in the narrowest sense can show is that the source of inward strength is not as yet exhausted. Yet does any one who has had such spiritual experience ever doubt that this source of strength is not merely 'unexhausted' but 'inexhaustible'? Ritschl's use of the word 'experience' differs from Kant's.

*versari cum Jesu.* Yet, in spite of the difficulty of the lesson, Christendom has not wholly failed to learn it: nor have there ever been wanting those who when they have heard His voice have admitted its absolute claim upon their obedience. And if Jesus has this absolute claim to rule our conduct, then Jesus is our God.

Here, then, is to be seen more clearly than elsewhere the exact nature of the revolution which Ritschl has effected in theology. Divinity is discovered to be primarily a moral attribute. Whereas the older theology argues that Jesus is to be obeyed in all things, because Jesus is God, Ritschl contends rather that Jesus is God because He is worthy of absolute obedience.

May we not, further, affirm with confidence that this latter order is the right one? If Jupiter had made and governed the world, he would still not be God, because he would not be worthy of our worship. Jesus is worthy of our worship whether He has made the world or not: since it is on His goodness, not on His power, that His claim to be our Lord depends.

Hence it follows—not that His exaltation, His pre-existence, His activity in Creation, are unimportant matters—but that though important they are not primary. To the soul which does not bow before Jesus in absolute homage, no demonstration of His pre-existence or omnipotence would reveal His Godhead. To the soul which does so bow before Him, His Godhead is revealed whether these doctrines are accepted or not.

Orthodox theology has, in fact, not always been true to itself. It has professed the principle that the Incarnation is the supreme revelation of God: and then—instead

of basing its conceptions of God upon Jesus—it has rather based its conceptions of Jesus upon *à priori* theories of God. The result is that it has placed His divinity not in what has been revealed, but in what is hidden: not in the compelling power of His words and life, but in something that is inferred to exist behind it. The inferences may all be sound, but still the method is not what it professes to be.

The more modern tendencies in theology suggest a wiser procedure. They recall us to the very test which was proposed to the first disciples. Can we recognize the Godhead of Jesus in the midst of His humiliation? Have we faith to perceive that even if He did not receive exaltation He was alone supremely worthy of it—that it is indeed a greater thing to have lived the life of Jesus than to have created the world? Those who demand external evidence to prove that He is 'no impostor' are merely confessing that they themselves have not yet seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Those who say that unless He created the world He is not 'really God', confess that they do not yet know what true Godhead means. When we know that Jesus is our lawful Master it adds vigour to our efforts to know that He is on the throne of heaven; but though His exaltation adds to our joy it adds nothing to His Godhead: for truly to know the Sufferer Who reveals Himself in Gethsemane and Calvary is to know Him to be none else but God. In each such manifestation He shows Himself divine: and if in them we do not see Him as God, we do not see Him as He is. Whiteness—said Aristotle—is no whiter for being eternally white.[1] Jesus becomes no more truly God for being eternally and pre-existently divine.

[1] Eth. Nic. i. 6.

Should we not then—instead of looking for external proofs—first make Jesus Himself the sole standard of Godhead? We want no higher God than He; we know that no higher God is conceivable or possible. We know that if the Will of the Ruler of the Universe differs from the Law revealed by Jesus, the Ruler of the Universe falls short of true divinity. If the Ruler of the Universe had been as the Jews conceived Him,—if He had forsaken Jesus upon the Cross,—it would change our whole conception of the world. But how should it change our estimate of Jesus? Would it not still remain true that only the God Who can be identified with Jesus has a just claim upon the worship of mankind?

## CHAPTER XV

## THE 'ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN'

IT has been the aim of all the preceding chapters to press upon the Christian preacher the importance of the lesson taught by Ritschl, and to maintain that the whole of our theology needs revision in the light of the Ritschlian criticism.

But, though this is the subject with which we have been expressly engaged, another conclusion has come to light meanwhile, which is hardly less important. Although the foundations of theology can be laid in moral and religious experience just as Ritschl teaches, this method seems insufficient by itself to complete the superstructure. The belief in God as a conscious Being, the faith in Special Providence, the hope of glory in the world to come, can hardly be dismissed as extraneous additions to the Christian Creed. But none of these beliefs can be learned from moral intuition or direct experience alone. If they are to be rationally defended at all, this must be done by means of a chain of reasoning. Therefore—unless we regard these doctrines as devoid of religious value—we shall inevitably be led back to the consideration of those 'rationalistic' arguments, such as the 'Argument from Design', of which the Ritschlians have been apt to speak too slightingly.[1]

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, p. 590 (E. tr. p. 625).

The Argument from Design is at the present moment under a cloud. 'The discovery of Natural Selection'—says Mr. Bernard Shaw in a well-turned phrase—might be described as 'the revelation of a method by which all the appearances of intelligent design in the Universe may have been produced by pure accident.'[1] Natural Selection—even if it had remained an unverified hypothesis—could not but suggest a doubt. May it not be that what we have taken to be 'evidences of design' are after all mere 'conditions of existence?'[2]

Popular theology, however—even in circles where the discoveries of Darwin are well-known—has not wholly abandoned the time-honoured argument. The world in all its aspects is subject to rules. More and yet more of these rules are revealed to us by every fresh pursuit on which we enter. And though there is, of course, such a thing as conforming to a rule accidentally and without being governed by it—trees, for example, may accidentally grow in a circle, or the stains of damp on the wall may make a regular pattern—no one can seriously regard the regularity of Nature as being of this purely accidental sort. If we contrast casual 'conformity to rules' with actual 'government by rules', we must regard the world as in some sense really 'governed' by them—for, if not, how could we use these rules for such purposes as astronomical prediction? We cannot reasonably predict a series of events by reference to a rule to which it only conforms by chance.

It is natural enough then that the popular theologian

[1] *Man and Superman*, preface to new popular edition.

[2] The phrases occur in a work, published anonymously, by the late Dr. Rowland Williams.

should proceed to argue that the influence of rules in Nature implies a Governing Mind. How—he asks—can a series of occurrences be subject to rules except through the agency of a mind, or minds, which can frame the rules and understand them? Again, if the world is a Single System, does not this point to one single ruling Mind rather than to many? And does not the general orderliness of the world, and its general appearance of being a rationally constructed scheme, suggest irresistibly to the open-minded observer—even in spite of disturbing factors such as pain and sin—that the Governing Mind is wise and good?

The argument is always impressive: it is nevertheless beset with difficulties.

The contention, for example, that Nature being an orderly whole needs a conscious Mind to construct and preserve it, leads to embarrassing consequences. For is not the Mind of the Creator itself an ordered Whole also? By the same reasoning it too requires an ordering Mind behind it, and this in its turn another—and so we could never reach finality.

Again the Argument from Design is wrong in treating 'accident' and 'design' as absolute alternatives. To maintain that 'wherever facts conform to a general rule, this is either by accident or by conscious design' is to overlook the familiar case of Geometry. The interior angles of every triangle conform to the general rule that the three taken together must be equal to two right angles. This is certainly no accident: yet it would never occur to any one who understood the Euclidean proof to point to this case as evidence of a conscious purpose.

These objections—especially the last—are not such as

can be dismissed lightly. And yet, surely, there is something to be said on the other side. If we can say nothing more, we may justly say as much as this—that the Argument from Design has called attention to certain facts in the constitution of Nature which have somewhat the same sort of significance as it attributes to them. These facts are not unimportant, even though the common theology has not found for them precisely the right interpretation.

What the argument from Design then seems to require is revision and restatement. As it stands, it is a strange mixture of truth and error: and the task of the modern theologian is to separate the error from the truth.

We shall find, however, that to restate the old argument correctly and at the same time clearly, is a work of quite extraordinary difficulty. The revised statement will come in conflict at every step with one or other of those philosophic tendencies which have been inherited by our generation from the Empiricist and Conceptualist schools of the Nineteenth Century. In one particular matter—the characteristic unwillingness of the modern mind to admit that there can be absoluteness and finality in the moral and aesthetic judgments of mankind—it will be opposed by the influence of writers so different in other respects as Nietzsche and Mr. F. H. Bradley. For these reasons the next few pages—though no more than a sketch in outline—cannot be quite easy reading,[1] and the reader must be prepared to pardon some awkward quasi-technical phraseology, which though conducing to brevity cannot fail to be a trial to his patience.

[1] The argument is stated briefly above: p. xvii (2).

Mention has already been made of the agreement of Nature with rules. Let us take—as the starting point for our new venture—the fact that the world is subject to rules not merely in the matter of physical uniformity, but in the higher aspects of Nature likewise.

Take, first of all, the case of beauty and harmony of colour. Not only does Nature afford us a lavish display of colour-schemes of extreme beauty: but—what is more remarkable still—there is a certain level of beauty below which Nature never falls. Nothing in Nature ever violates the principles of good colouring as these are often violated in the oleograph and the coloured photograph, and sometimes even in the attire of feminine humanity.

Is the beauty of natural objects then accidental—a mere by-product of physical uniformity? Some of the evolutionary explanations of aesthetic facts will be briefly dealt with below. But the truth is that the discovery of Natural Selection has made far less difference to this problem than might at first sight be supposed; and the decision must rest with simple observation and common sense.

The beauty of Nature depends upon colour-schemes of a highly complex character. As every one who has ever tried to sketch from Nature knows, the laws of harmony in colour are strict and difficult to fulfil. A few wrong touches are enough to ruin the beauty of a whole picture. Thus the beauty of Nature—its avoidance of inharmonious combinations—is far from being a matter of course. Whenever we find a large number of separate facts agreeing strictly with a single principle,—'This agreement' we say 'cannot be due to accident.' And this is exactly what we find here. When we see that Nature conforms itself, unconsciously but unerringly, to the very same principles

of taste, positive and negative, which the artist is continually striving to obey—which moreover he can never succeed in obeying except by laborious selective effort, and as a result of long training or exceptional inspiration—the theory that Nature obeys these aesthetic principles by mere accident becomes untenable.[1]

Moreover the notion that natural beauty is an accident is contradicted by our practice. If any one maintained, either that natural objects are beautiful by mere chance, or that our opinion of their beauty is a pious illusion based on the *à priori* doctrine that Nature is the work of God, the constant practice of painters would by itself be enough to refute him. The painter, whatever his religious creed, takes Nature for his model. Desiring to grasp the principles of beauty with deeper insight, he turns to those forms and scenes where they are consistently exemplified. His advice to his pupil to 'study Nature' is virtually a prediction—as confident in its own field as the predictions of the astronomer in his—that these principles will be found to dominate Nature in every corner.

But what follows? If it is not by 'accident' that Nature is beautiful, then it is in some sense a 'law' that what is in accordance with the principles of beauty shall 'as such' occur.

Whenever we say 'This is no accident' we are affirming

[1] It is not merely that in Nature there are 'many pretty scenes'. Each of these involves the agreement of a large number of coloured points with an intricate aesthetic principle in our minds. This principle is not a mere product or copy of Nature. It has a certain independence. For example we can judge the colour-schemes of Nature as more or less perfect: sometimes we can even supply their defects, although not even on the most 'unpaintable' day does Nature ever fall below a certain level.

the truth of some explanatory theory: [1] or (as we should more naturally express it in the case of any recurrent phenomenon) we are affirming the truth of a 'law'. [2] We find again and again in Nature harmonious combinations of colours. Does harmonious combination occur 'as such'? Are the various colours selected by Nature 'because' they are mutually harmonious, or not? If the harmoniousness of the colours has nothing whatever to do with their occurrence, then their harmony is a sheer accident—just as much as it would be a sheer accident if a melodious air were played by an animal walking on the keyboard.[3] But this is the sort of elaborate accident

[1] A few examples will make this plain. If I say 'It is no accident that so many of your guests are Germans' I am suggesting that it is in some sense 'because' they are Germans that they have been invited—that in some sense Germans have been invited 'as such'. If I say 'It cannot be an accident that we always meet here on a Wednesday' I am suggesting some kind of causal connexion between our encounter and the day of the week on which it occurs. We must distinguish the 'accidental' (τὸ συμβεβηκός) from the 'contingent' (τὸ ενδεχόμενον ἄλλως ἔχειν). To say 'This is no accident' goes beyond the mere *general* and *formal* assertion 'This is not an event without a cause'. The latter assertion is too obvious to be worth making in practical life; the former always implies a *particular* explanatory theory, even though—as in the instances given above—it may be a very vague one. It would be assumed that you invite no guest without some reason: the question would be whether the explanation of the presence of some is to be found in their nationality.

[2] For this word see below.

[3] It is alleged that the youthful Hildebrand, before he could read, happened to form the letters of a singularly appropriate verse from the Psalms by casually putting together pieces of wood—*literas nesciens, casu formavit, ex ligni segmentis, hoc dictum Davidis 'Dominabitur a mari usque ad mare.'* Cave's *Hist. Lit.* p. 151. We must choose here between fiction and miracle: such an elaborate *accident* is quite beyond belief.

which we cannot really believe in. If on the other hand it is in any sense 'because' of their harmoniousness that the colours in Nature occur, then it is in some sense a law that the harmonious colour occurs 'as such', and Nature must be regarded as being in some sense 'governed' by aesthetic principles, though not necessarily through the agency of a Conscious Mind.[1]

This conclusion, if admitted to be correct, cannot be denied to be important. Natural Science for the most part eschews 'teleology'.[2] It refuses to explain facts by the 'purposes' or 'ends' which they might serve. And this refusal in its own place is right: since teleology may often be the enemy of research.[3]

Yet we cannot banish teleological conceptions entirely. Our reason must recognize the beauty of Nature, not necessarily as the fulfilment of 'purpose', but certainly as the realization of an 'end'. To right reason beauty is an 'end in itself'—a thing of value for its own sake. If then it is a law of Nature that Nature is beautiful, this law may certainly be described as teleological.

[1] Cf. the remark about Geometry above. This argument will naturally be resisted by those thinkers to whom the exclusion of all teleology seems necessary to the progress of science. Yet can it be resisted except by evasion? 'Is it *in any sense because* of their mutual harmony that the harmonious colours occur?' If we say 'In no sense because of this' then the harmonies of Nature are accidental. Thus, though we are *not* obliged to choose between accident and *design*, we *are* obliged to choose between accident and *teleology*. See next note.

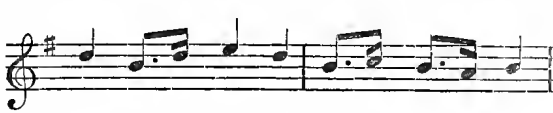
[2] It is not scientific e.g. to explain the berries of autumn by the needs of the birds next winter. Teleology consists in accounting for facts by the *ends* which they serve.

[3] Newton, for example, would never have discovered gravitation if he had been satisfied to explain the fall of apples by the beneficent intention of the Creator that they should be eaten by animals on the ground.

Nor are these conclusions affected by any evolutionary hypothesis. The evolutionary explanation of aesthetic facts takes two main forms: the one relying chiefly on Hereditary Habituation, the other on Natural Selection. Our pleasure in the green of the landscape, for example, is explained as due to the fact that green trees have been familiar to our race from remote ages. What the eye is accustomed to perceive it perceives easily: what it perceives easily, it perceives pleasantly: and that which we perceive with pleasure is called beautiful.

But this type of explanation breaks down if we apply it generally. It does not explain our pleasure in melodies which are original or colour-schemes which are novel: and for some of the most familiar aesthetic laws—such as the prohibition of consecutive fifths in music—it is quite unable to account. The hypothesis might conceivably explain our pleasure in red, or in green, or in the transition from one familiar colour to another which is often found beside it. But just as the charm of a melody is not the mere cumulative effect of a number of melodic intervals—if it were we might take the intervals in reverse order[1]—so neither is the charm of a scheme of colour identical with the cumulative effect of a number of pleasant transi-

[1] Mr. Grant Allen's theories on this subject might be put to a simple test. The first phrase of the familiar Toreador Song in *Carmen*, contains the following 'transitions' DE, ED, DB, BA, AB, BC, CB. But so also does the following phrase,



besides two quite pleasant intervals BD, DB in addition. On Mr. Grant Allen's theory it ought to be the more pleasing melody.

tions. If taste were a mere matter of physical and sensual habituation, the rational conception of a single harmonious scheme of colour would never have arisen.

The attempt to account for our aesthetic tastes by Natural Selection is equally unsuccessful. What good does a delicate enjoyment of the colour-schemes of Nature do to us in the struggle for existence? Actual colour-blindness may diminish an animal's chance of survival. But no one perishes—brute or man—from a lack of the higher qualities of aesthetic taste. That a taste for the particular colour-schemes which Nature presents is not a necessary condition of survival is plain from the fact that in the majority of cases this delicacy of taste—though generally present as a capacity—remains undeveloped even in civilized mankind.

Again, both these theories imply that the sense of beauty is of the nature of an illusion—that we give the name beauty to what happens to please us; that between beauty and its opposite there is no real or 'objective' difference. But this is a view which no one admits with regard to the kinds of beauty he understands, and in extreme cases it is admitted by nobody at all. When the process of evolution has produced—as in many individuals it has—a type of bad taste which is really flagrant, it then becomes quite evident that by 'good taste' we do not mean merely that particular kind of taste which is able to survive in the evolutionary struggle. Art-critics, like other people, contradict one another, and make mistakes. Yet here as elsewhere there are some firmly established results: and one of the surest of these—for any one who has any eye for beauty—is the delicacy and harmoniousness of the colour-schemes of Nature. The merit of these does not consist solely in the fact that they happen to

suit our eyes. On the other hand we discover that the systematic training of the sense of colour adds not merely to our enjoyment but to our knowledge.[1] The beauty,

[1] The attempts to explain aesthetic facts by evolutionary theories are interesting enough to deserve detailed treatment. The following headings may suggest the general lines which this treatment might follow :—

*A*. Protective colouring in animals. Colour in flowers rendering them conspicuous to fertilizing insects. Is it a mere *accident* that the colours which possess these protective and fertilizing properties are at the same time such as to play their part in the elaborate colour-schemes of Nature? Natural selection explains the occurrence of each particular colour: but does not under the present head explain why only those colours occur which satisfy certain strict aesthetic requirements.

*B*. Sexual selection. The taste of the female animal for bright colours explains the *brightness* of colouring in the male, but not the *delicacy* of the colouring which is to us the most conspicuous element.

Neither *A* nor *B* afford any explanation of the delicate colour-schemes outside the animal and vegetable kingdom, e.g. the beauty of rock, water, or the sky at sunset.

*C*. The theory mentioned in the text—which seeks to explain not the occurrence of the colours directly but *our liking* for the colours which occur—is the only theory capable of wide application to the facts.

This theory is presented in three forms :—

I. Hereditary Habituation.—The theory that what we like is that which has been familiar to our progenitors.

II. Natural Selection direct.—The theory that our tastes have been *directly* valuable to the race in the struggle for existence.

III. Natural Selection indirect.—The theory that—though of no direct value in the struggle—they are *associated* with other qualities which possess this value.

Assume that qualities (a), (b), (c), (d) tend to the survival of the species which possesses them: and that with these are associated respectively (w), (x), (y), (z), these latter standing for 'aesthetic tastes'. Let (w) stand for 'the latent capacity to like the Toreador Song when heard'. (This tendency—if

we find, was there all the time: we have now learned to perceive it.

The case of Beauty, however, is only one example among many. Beauty is far from being the only case where Nature is regulated by laws in its higher—that is in its 'teleological'—aspects. For example, it is a law of Nature that the general tendencies of human thought are not merely psychologically uniform but, on the whole, logically correct. Our belief in this law is our sole justification for deliberate thinking. Yet we do as a fact trust our thought even where its correctness has no practical bearing, and cannot be accounted for by Natural

tastes are to be explained by evolution—must have been maturing simultaneously all over Europe in the ages preceding the production of *Carmen*). Assume (w), to be associated with (a). (Cf. the association of 'deafness' with 'blue eyes' in white cats). If (a) is useful to the species it explains the universality of (w). (x) ('taste for colour scheme of to-day's sunset') might be preserved by similar association with (b).

Notice, however, that what this theory does not explain is (1) the tendency to *correctness* in taste, a tendency presupposed in all artistic training (art-criticism would therefore be reduced by this theory to, or even beneath, the level of tea-tasting), (2) the agreement of our tastes with what is actually present in Nature. Natural Selection does not explain why tastes (x), (y) and (z) (tastes which are supposed to be preserved by their association with (b), (c) and (d),) should happen to find in Nature the objects which gratify them. Unless it is assumed (returning to theory No. II) that the lack of this aesthetic gratification would kill off the species, the agreement of our tastes with Nature —which quite apart from any assumption as to the *correctness* of our taste is an undoubted fact—is left unexplained.

The whole subject is of intrinsic interest. Regarded however. as a reply to the Argument from Design, the evolutionary explanation of beauty has flourished merely by its vagueness. The theory if pinned down to one definite form will be seen to be inadequate.

Selection. Again, in spite of all varieties of moral standard, there is, after all, a solid background of agreement. If it were not so, we could have no commercial or political dealings with the lower races. It is, in other words, a 'law' that the Moral Ideal, when its demands are presented even to the lowest specimens of the human race, evokes some measure of response. The laws of Nature, then, are far from being exclusively physical.[1]

Here therefore we may ask a really comprehensive question. It is because of the beauty of physical objects, and because of human intelligence and human morality, and for other similar reasons, that we speak of the world as a 'rational whole'. We call it a rational whole because it realizes rational ends. Is this rationality then an accident? Is it an accident that in all these many

[1] In this connexion it is quite worth while to reflect on some of the more 'human' aspects of the behaviour of the lower animals. The following case of mimicry was recently observed in North Oxfordshire. A Great Green Woodpecker had flown over the high road, describing ascending and descending curves in its well known manner, marking its rhythmical movements with regular cries. A wren, sitting on the hedge at the roadside, immediately imitated the action and cries of the woodpecker, without leaving its perch. The three or four forward plunges, which had carried the larger bird over a couple of fields, were copied by the wren in an upward and downward movement of its own body. The imitation was quite masterly of its kind, recalling nothing so much as the boast of Coquelin that he could act the leading part in the *Polish Jew*, standing on a four-foot table. Again, the cuckoo has been heard to sing a major second, a minor third, a major third, a perfect fourth, a perfect fifth, the minor and the major sixth: i.e. every diatonic interval between the major second and the major sixth *with the one exception of the tritone.*

respects Nature fulfils such ends as our reason approves—that it agrees at so many points with the ideal which reason sets up?

The world, no doubt, may be called 'rational' in two distinct senses: either simply because it is subject to general laws—'in this sense' says Dr. Rashdall [1] 'the Universe might be rational if it were a sort of infernal machine'—or, secondly, in the more specific sense that it is such as to merit rational approval. 'It has been part of the *leger de main* of a certain school' Dr. Rashdall continues 'to prove that the Universe is rational in the first sense, and then to assume that it must be rational in the second.'

We are concerned here with the latter sense alone. We are confining ourselves to such evidences of 'rationality' as may be found in those aspects of the world in which it is the fit object of the painter's contemplation and the poet's praise: in which, again, it is the fit domicile of moral education and co-operative moral enterprise: in which therefore it is realizing rational 'ends'. Is the world's appearance of rationality—taken in this specific sense—something superficial, external, accidental?

We cannot readily think so. The great historian, it has been said, is commonly a Theist. No doubt there are instances to the contrary. Yet, at least, it is natural on the whole that the man whose interest in the world is less abstract than that of the mere physicist, should perceive irresistibly that the cases where ends approved by reason are realized in Nature are too numerous to be due to chance.

Again it is solely on the strength of our belief in the

[1] *The Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. ii. p. 219, note.

necessary conformity of the world to a rational standard that we reject the superstitions of Paganism. We refuse to believe in Charon and his ferry, not from mere lack of evidence—this would only justify us in suspending judgment—but simply because we perceive that in a rationally ordered world no such incidents can find place. If we consider the grounds on which we reject these incidents so decisively, we shall readily find that they are rejected because they are 'irrational' in the second of the two senses which Dr. Rashdall has distinguished. How could we show—who ever tries to show?—that the incidents in the Pagan myths might not be brought under general laws just as easily as many biographical incidents which we accept? But they are irrational in the sense that they can form no part of such a world as right reason could approve. In this sense, then, we hold it to be a law that Nature wholly rejects the irrational and conforms itself to the demands of reason.

What bearing has all this upon religious faith? Three brief remarks may help to an answer to this question.

We have seen, first, that by speaking thus of a rational 'standard', we are using the word 'standard' in the same general sense in which it is used in æsthetics and ethics. Our perception of the world's 'rationality' is a 'judgment of value'.

Secondly: such a judgment implies a confidence in the correctness of the standard by which we judge. We cannot hold that a standard by which we ourselves are at this moment judging is 'merely subjective'. To hold that something is 'good', is to hold that it is 'really good'. To hold that the world is 'rational' is to hold that it conforms to 'the standard set up by right reason'.

The third point is more difficult, since it touches the problem of Evil. The conclusion we have already arrived at may be summed up thus:—'The observed agreements between the actual world and the Ideal which reason sets up are too numerous to be accidental: therefore it is in some sense a law that the demands of this ideal must as such be realized.' But this is a law which, in the nature of the case, can accept no qualification or limitation [1] without becoming entirely unmeaning. Nothing indeed could be more flagrantly irrational than a system of laws which prescribed elaborate agreement with the rational standard at some points and violation of it at others. If we admitted for a moment that such is the system of law to which the world is really subject, all the practical confidence which we base upon 'the rationality of the Universe' would be at an end. Such a Universe, of course, is believed in by nobody. Those who deny the optimistic conception of the world which belongs to Christianity, deny at the same time that there is any law of Nature which possesses a teleological character. They have therefore to treat beauty and morality and intelligence as evolutionary accidents. Thus the controversy between Christian Optimism and the doctrines which oppose it turns mainly on the questions discussed in the earlier portion of this chapter. The man who admits teleological laws at all, cannot without absurdity draw back from a thorough-going optimism.

[1] In some cases the extension of an observed rule may remain doubtful. A stranger arriving in London might soon perceive that it is a 'law' that letter-boxes are painted red: but he might be ignorant whether this law held good of all Europe or only of the City of Westminster.

Two questions, however, will inevitably be asked. If the belief in the rationality of the Universe and the acceptance of a thorough-going Optimism are identical beliefs, how comes it that any single thinker fails to be an Optimist? The best reply to this question is to ask another in return. We all are ready to believe in a world which contradicts the ideals of other people: but does any one seriously believe in a world which contradicts his own? The Physicist's belief in a reign of law and order beyond the narrow sphere of our experience is an act of faith no less than is the optimism of religion: and, in truth, the two acts of faith are in their essence one and the same. In a word, no one doubts that the Universe conforms to the ideal of reason: the only dispute is as to what that ideal contains. Thus, here as elsewhere, the final question between religious faith and unbelief turns upon a judgment of value.

But what of the facts of evil? Christianity not only admits these facts but insists upon them. To speak lightly of evil as 'imperfect good' is quite contrary to the Christian spirit. Yet the ultimate judgment of Christian piety upon the world as a whole, is expressed in the words of the dying Chrysostom—'Glory be to God for all things'. The recognition that many things are, when regarded in isolation, utterly evil, has not seemed inconsistent with the faith that the world, regarded in its totality, is good.[1] It is sufficient to point out here that unless the world, regarded as a whole, is in entire accordance with the ideal which reason sets up, then it is a pure accident that it agrees with it at any single point. This follows from what the word 'accident' means.

[1] Descartes, *Méditation Quatrième.*

Either, then, all evil is in the end good: or all good comes by chance only. To the keen eye of popular religion the truth of this antithesis has always been clear; and hence popular Christianity has unfailingly drawn the conclusion that even the worst of evils are all 'for the best'.

These suggestions for a revised statement of the familiar Argument from Design must now be left to the thought and criticism of the reader. A few words, however, may be added as to the word 'law' and its significance.

When we call it a 'law' that 'the interior angles of every triangle are equal to two right angles' we mean that this is a 'necessary truth': and we can demonstrate that this truth is necessary because it follows from the very definition of what a triangle is—from the very meaning of the term.

Are the laws of Nature, then, laws in the same sense? Could they conceivably be deduced—in the same sort of way—from the meanings of ideas? The hope that—if only we could attain sufficient knowledge for the task—the world and all its contents might be shown to follow from general conceptions, as truly as geometrical facts follow from the general notion of a 'line' an 'angle' and a 'triangle', was not obscurely hinted at by Plato.[1]

[1] *Republic*, 511b, 509. With 517c cf. 516c 1. The Idea of the Good, which is perceived by pure thought only, is regarded as the ground not only of the truth of the intelligible ideas, but of the existence of the visible things. The relation of this doctrine to the merely phenomenal nature of the latter is perhaps never cleared up.

But this hope has met with singularly little sympathy. Philosophers have been eager to defend themselves from the charge that they sought to 'fashion the world out of categories'; and great pains have been taken to prove, of Hegel in particular, that he made no attempt to deduce the world as it stands from the ultimate categories of thought.

The repudiation of this Platonic hope is in some ways intelligible enough. That in our present state of knowledge we cannot deduce the facts of the world's history from ideas—that therefore there is much which we cannot as yet see 'under the form of necessity' but must be contented to learn from experience—is an admission of great practical importance. Yet it is only one side of the truth. It does not follow that, because we cannot perform it yet, this deduction from ideas is ultimately inconceivable. Indeed—if we think of it—the ultimate deducibility of all facts from ideas is involved in the very notion of scientific explanation. Explanations are couched in words; and words are the symbols of ideas: it is by means of ideas therefore that we explain. But explanation *through* ideas implies sequence *from* them. If the fact does not really follow from the ideas; how can it be explained by means of them? It is only in rare cases—as for example in Geometry—that all the links in the chain of sequence can be shown. But the consecutiveness of the chain does not depend upon our perception of it. Moreover—since the strength of a chain is the strength of the weakest part of it—the entire value of the few links which are known depends upon the absolute consecutiveness of the whole. If only those few links were valid which are known to man, the whole explanation would be worthless.

There is no room to go more fully into this important matter here. Enough perhaps has been said to set the reader upon a train of reflection which will lead him to the conclusion that unless a fact is ultimately deducible from ideas it is not ultimately explicable: and further that if it is not capable of ultimate explanation, it is not capable of explanation at all.

This discussion bears directly upon the doctrine of God. An infidel lecturer was asked the question: 'Who made the World?' 'If you say that God made it,' he replied, 'I shall ask, Who made God?'.

For the popular Theist the infidel's retort is unanswerable. Popular Theism, in fact, is as lacking in finality as popular Materialism itself. While the latter explains the world by atoms but does not explain why the atoms should exist, the former explains the world as the work of God but leaves the existence of God unexplained and unexplainable.

The only path out of this quagmire of non-finality is the path indicated by Plato. This path the common understanding[1] never finds: and therefore, though its religion is habitually sound, its theology is always faulty. To the common understanding 'ideas' are merely 'something in our heads'. But when men come to see—what is plainest in the case of mathematics—that there are truths which are prior to all knowledge and independent of it, and that these truths hold good simply because

[1] The phrase is Hegel's. It is not a quite satisfactory expression since it suggests a certain superciliousness on the part of the philosopher. Yet if the philosopher has learnt anything whatever, this must give him advantage at some points over those who have not this knowledge.

they follow from the meaning of ideas, then we are on the road to discovering the direction in which alone finality is to be looked for.

Is it possible to combine this conception of the world as resting on 'ideas' as its ultimate basis, with the Christian belief in a conscious God? On this question something more will be said later. It is enough to remark here that the notion of God as bearing no merely external or accidental relation to the world—but rather as being the ultimate necessity by which the Universe has existence, the ultimate law by which all things subsist, expressing itself in the form of Conscious Will—is (as we shall see below) far more in accord with the aspirations of the religious soul than are the usual definitions of popular theology. Here as elsewhere, we may contrast the shallowness of popular theology with the profundity and correctness of popular religion.

## CHAPTER XVI

## A FUTURE LIFE

BEFORE we accept an argument which leads to a universal Optimism, we ought to subject it at every point to the severest criticism. The philosophical and sceptical temperaments—as Mr. Bradley has reminded us—are seldom found together. Yet if ever scepticism is in its right place, it is when it is applied to the arguments which are the foundation of religious belief. When so much depends upon the rope, every strand should be examined with jealous care.

But the very same spirit of intellectual sincerity which refuses to accept a principle without sufficient ground, will also draw conclusions from it fearlessly when once it is firmly established. A theology which accepts Optimism must have the courage to develop it. It must not be afraid to state, for example, a definite theory of Evil, of Special Providence, of a Future life.

With regard to the most interesting of these questions, we have a striking example of fearlessness in the theology of the Middle Ages. St. Thomas Aquinas in dealing with the Future Life shows himself conspicuously free from the modern fear of detail. He inquires whether all the

limbs of the human body will rise again,[1] whether the hair and nails will rise again,[2] whether our blood will rise again,[3] whether everything in the body pertaining to the verity of human nature will rise again in the same body,[4] whether all men will rise as persons in the prime of life (*in aetate juvenili*),[5] whether in the resurrection there will remain difference of sex,[6]—and this question he answers in the affirmative. He discusses the opinion that 'in the Blessed after the resurrection all powers of the soul (*omnes potentiae animae*) and all members of the body are in the active exercise of their characteristic functions (*in suis actibus*)': that perfect pleasure includes all forms even of sensuous delectation.[7] He inquires whether the Blessed will possess all their five senses not merely potentially but actively,[8] and also whether we are to conceive the saints in glory as moving from place to place.[9] Motion, he declares, takes away nothing from the stability of a mind stayed on God. He holds therefore that it is probable that the saints in glory will move about at their pleasure, that their sight may be refreshed (*reficiatur*) by the beauty of diverse created things in which the wisdom of God will abundantly shine forth.[10]

Detailed discussion of this kind is uncongenial, as we know, to modern taste; and modern religion is of course quite free, if it wishes it, to leave these questions aside (as the Ritschlian teaching has disposed us to do) without

[1] *Summa Theol. Suppl. 3ae partis.* lxxx. vel lxxxii., art. I.
[2] Do. art. II.
[3] Do. art. III.
[4] Do. art. IV.
[5] lxxxi. vel lxxxiii., art. I.
[6] Do. art. III.
[7] Do. art. IV.
[8] lxxxii. vel lxxxiv., art. IV.
[9] lxxxiv. vel lxxxvi., art. II.
[10] Do. conclusio.

in any way blunting its sense of sin, of pardon, or of communion with God. But though in religion we may freely concede the 'right of the individual to a general haziness', the same concession must on no account be extended to theology. Clearly the systematic theologian must not shirk a question because it is difficult.

The general question of a future life cannot be called unimportant. Lord Haldane,[1] Professor Bosanquet,[2] and others have, no doubt, done excellent work in showing that religion is not to be identified with mere other-worldliness. At all times our chief question must be, not 'What is to be hoped for in a world beyond?' but 'What is the true significance of the world which confronts us?' But necessary as the protest against other-worldliness is, it is still something of a half-truth. 'Hegel', says Dr. Bosanquet with evident pride, 'never asks "Is it?", but always "What is it?"' Yet the question "Is it?" —"Is there, for example, a future life?"—is not a foolish question always. Indeed the man who by seeing his experiences in their true significance knows eternal life here,[3] gains a heightened interest in eternal life hereafter. If we have made the best of earthly friendship we shall be the more eager to meet our friends again. If we have sought in philosophic study for the unification of all knowledge, we shall wish to complete the work which is here left imperfect. If we have struggled for inward purity, we shall desire a life in which absolute

[1] *Pathway to Reality*, first series, p. 16.

[2] Introductory Essay to his translation of *The Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art* (Kegan Paul, 1886).

[3] St. John xvii. 3, cf. 1 John iii. 15; v. 20.

purity can be realized. In general, if we have accepted the Christian standard of values and not the Oriental one, we shall wish to bring 'all thoughts, all passions, all delights'—including the beatific vision of God—within the unity of a single experience.

In close connexion with the hope of a future life stands the hope of a bodily resurrection. A disbelief in the resurrection of the body has been regarded sometimes as a sign of intellectual superiority. 'For though the body dies the soul is still immortal.' The words have been made familiar by their association with melodious music. It is to the undying credit of High Churchmen—characteristic at once of the sound sense and high breeding of that school—that they have kept alive in English religion the faculty to perceive that in such a phrase, however well adapted to a musical setting, we have what the Christian mind must regard as an ill-balanced antithesis. The prevailing tendency of Christian hope has been, not towards a doctrine of the essential indestructibility of the soul,[1] but rather towards a faith which expects the future life of soul and of body on the same general grounds. The sentiment which condemns the desire for bodily resurrection as a coarse and earthy hope is indeed but a symptom of the same false taste as would expurgate from the *Te Deum* the mention of the Virgin's womb. Those who do not perceive the false delicacy in the one case will not perceive it in the other. But at least we must confront the alternatives and take our choice. If we regard the body as evil, we

[1] The essential incorruptibility of the soul (on which see *Summa Theol.*, Part I, question 75, art. VI: Sec. secundae, question 164, art. I conclusio: St. Cyril's Catechetical Lectures, IV, etc.) is a doctrine necessarily confined to the learned.

shall desire to banish it from heaven. If we esteem it as God's good gift, we shall desire it restored at the resurrection. The former view accords with the sentiment of Eastern barbarism: the latter with that of the Western civilization which has deemed the body worthy to be celebrated by the brush of Titian or the chisel of Phidias.

It must be doubtful, indeed, whether those who believe in a future life apart from a bodily resurrection, can ever have thought out their own meaning. The decisive question is that which has been asked by St. Thomas [1] long ago. Is the saint in glory to be conceived as experiencing the sensations of sight and touch? That sight and touch may subsist without the support of any material *substratum* is the well-known doctrine of Berkeley. But a thorough-going Idealism is one thing; the notion of matter as existing on earth but discarded in heaven is quite another. If the life of the Blessed is conceived as involving the active employment of the senses of sight and touch, this signifies to the plain man, who is no idealist, that there is in heaven matter to be touched and seen—bodies which, however incorruptible, are still material. If on the other hand we conceive heaven—as some have conceived the intermediate state—as a life in which, while possessing thought and memory, man is deprived of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, does not this set before us the hope of a very imperfect glory? [2]

[1] See note above.

[2] On the question whether the glorified body is *palpable* as well as *tangible*, see references below. Flame, e.g., or vapour into which we can plunge our hands without encountering resistance is *tangible* but not *palpable*. St. Thomas holds the view that though the blessed, while remaining 'tangible', can render their

Similar to the question of the resurrection of the flesh, is the question of the revival in heaven of our emotions and passions. Mr. F. H. Bradley has drawn attention to the general 'revolt', as he calls it, of modern Christianity against the 'stern sentence of the Gospel' which declares that in the life to come we shall neither marry nor be given in marriage. That the meeting again of lovers, even more than the meeting again of those bound together by other ties, is prominent in the religious hope of our day is abundantly clear. But is this hope a revolt from the sentence of the Gospel? Surely not, if the text is taken in its context. The error of the Sadducees consisted not in pitching their hopes too high, but rather in imagining that heaven must necessarily possess all the limitations and restrictions of earth. They erred because they underrated the power of God to do exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think. The modern hope is thus not so much a revolt as a development. If the Christians of the first age had spoken boldly on this subject, they must have incurred the suspicion—which has attached itself to the followers of Mahomet—of desiring a purely sensual Paradise. The frank development in modern Christianity of a hope which, in the circumstances of His time, was perforce left undeveloped by our Saviour, is—if we will reflect upon it—at once a conspicuous fulfilment of the promise that we should do greater works than He,[1] and a testimony to the power by which He has transformed the world.

body 'impalpable' at will, they are normally palpable as well as tangible. Supplem. lxxxiii. or lxxxv., art. VI.

For a fuller discussion of this subject see St. Thomas *in quartum librum Sententiarum*, dist. 44, qu. 2, art. II., qu. 6.

[1] St. John xiv. 12.

Since then such questions can hardly be ignored altogether, what is the practical duty of the theologian towards them? In our days these problems are discussed freely, but they are seldom dealt with systematically. Is the theologian bound to offer a systematic treatment?

The question is not without its difficulties. It is plain, however, that the timidity which does not venture beyond scattered hints and tentative suggestions belongs to the spirit rather of unbelief than of faith. Those for whom the Future Life is a matter of deep concern will be more in sympathy with St. Thomas who raises questions of detail and answers them—with Mr. Keble who desires to frame hopes of heaven which shall be new every morning—than with the conventional teacher who will not stray an inch beyond the limits marked out for him in advance by the language of the Bible and the Fathers.

Yet it does not follow that we are to 'modernize' our conception of Heaven in the manner of certain popular preachers. These preachers have tried, not merely to state in general terms the elements which must be present in a heaven adequate to our hopes, but actually to bring these various elements together into a single connected picture. They have described a type of existence in which, besides engaging in the exercises of religion, we should read the poetry of Shakespeare and be enraptured by the melodies of Mozart: in which the golden harps of tradition should be supplemented by the violins and pianofortes of modern life. All such attempts must inevitably end in failure. To unite heterogeneous elements in a single scheme—indeed even to arrange a multitude of details of any sort so as to produce an impression of congruity and harmony—is the prerogative of genius. To unite in one all-inclusive picture the

multifarious elements demanded by a perfect human existence would require genius that may well be called superhuman. It is the mark of an age of high culture to perceive that, many as are the varied and conflicting ideals which human thought has framed, there is in each an element of truth. But since Heaven must be conceived as exhibiting not merely comprehensiveness but internal congruity and unity, it is easy to see how the formation of a detailed picture of it surpasses the power of our imagination. A critic who has watched four acts of a drama with attention may be able to predict many of the incidents which must have a place in the concluding act: he may yet be unable to write the concluding act himself. Similarly we may venture to predict that in Heaven no single element of good will be lacking; and yet may confess ourselves unable to forecast in detail this last act of God's great Drama of the Universe.

But besides the fact that the detailed description of Heaven is beyond our powers, there are also many positive difficulties with which theology cannot well refuse to cope. It is indeed often the vaguer difficulties of sentiment, rather than objections which can be articulately expressed, which cause the modern world to look unsympathetically upon the hopes of the Christian. There are those who feel that under the cloudless skies of Fra Angelico's Paradise, or amid the golden light of the New Jerusalem, they would long sometimes for the more delicate tints of an autumn morning in Old England. Others have the fear that in a life of perfect glory they would be tortured by the sorrowful reflection of Alexander

the Great that there remained no more worlds to conquer.[1] It is the struggle against temptation that has given life its nobility and worth. What dignity—they ask—would remain in a life from which all temptation is removed? There are others who know that they have learned much even from the Pessimism of Schopenhauer. If then there is any single element of correct feeling in the temper of mind which Schopenhauer has produced in them, this element of feeling must find in the Universe a corresponding element of fact which satisfies its demand, or the Universe will *pro tanto* fall short of perfection. But can a Universe which fulfils this demand fulfil at the same time the demands of Christian Optimism? There are those again who find that in contemplating Nature their enthusiasm is chiefly stirred by the unremitting struggle for the perpetuation and perfecting of the species. They find therefore more to repel than to attract in an immortality which relates only to the perpetuation of the individual.[2] Lastly there are the numberless difficulties associated with the ideas of the infinite and the eternal. No one who has imbibed anything of the spirit of the Greeks can fail to recognize that 'measure' 'proportion' 'limit,' or however we name it, is one among the conditions of perfection. Can a Universe then be a 'perfect Whole' which is conceived as spreading itself out indefinitely in all directions?

[1] This sorrowful reflection is made more acute by the needless assumption that in Heaven the warfare of earth must fade more and more into the background of our memory. A sense of victory in which the memory of the struggle remained ever fresh need not be ignoble.

[2] It is curious to notice in this matter the contrast between modern and medieval sentiment. See *Summa Theol. Supplem.* lxxx. vel lxxxii., art. II. Conclusio. ad Secundum.

Here then are difficulties enough to justify a systematic method of approaching the subject.[1] Yet we ought not to declare them insoluble till we have made a serious attempt to solve them: and to discover what in each case the difficulty really amounts to.

Take, for example, those which turn upon conceptions which may be classed as aesthetic. The only detailed pictures of a life of glory which are aesthetically attractive are those which are composed of very simple elements, and which therefore—like the sea of glass and the pearly gates of the Apocalypse, or the shouts and feasting of St. Bernard's hymn—must be frankly accepted as symbolic. If we accepted the scenes depicted, say, by Fra Angelico as the real conclusion to the varied scene of life as we know it on earth—if we thought that the actual sequel to the tender half-tones revealed by the modern landscape-painter was to be this medieval revel of primary colours—the Universe would present to us a strangely bewildering appearance of bizarrerie and grotesqueness. The texture of our present life, with all its ragged edges, is yet too good to be adequately mended by the sudden introduction of a purple patch of so incongruous a pattern.

A distinguished writer has spoken severely of the application of artistic analogies in theology. But we are dealing here with no mere analogy. A Universe that is to be perfect must not be aesthetically incongruous. It must possess qualities which not merely resemble those of a work of art, but are in part the very same. Against inartistic representations of Heaven a secularist

[1] With these difficulties—as also with the question of the restatement of the Argument from Design—I am hoping to deal at length elsewhere.

philosophy will always have an easy triumph. A purely 'unsupernatural' Universe preserves at least its unity of style: and the conviction that the world cannot violate the demands of aesthetic unity is one of the strongest of modern beliefs, though it does not always find articulate expression.

It is worth while, then, to point out that a Christian conception of Heaven does not necessarily ignore these aesthetic claims. Take, as an illustration of this, a conception of the future life which played an important part in the popular religion of the Middle Ages. In the *Golden Legend*,[1] comparison is made between the present world and the Seventy Years' Exile in Babylon, the end of the world being compared to the return of Israel to its own land. The former is signified by the seventy days of Septuagesima, the latter by the renewed Alleluias of Easter. Such a symbolizing of the relations of earth to Heaven, by the representation of the two in one single ceremonial scheme of Christian holy-days is closely akin to the conception of the Universe as a drama needing more than one act for its completion. The 'time of the deviation' is conceived as the 'prelude' to the life of glory: or Heaven as the 'finale' to the 'time of our pilgrimage of the life of this world.' If then we are disposed to feel that a future life of incorruption would violate the unity of nature—would be inconsistent with the principle that *in mundo non datur saltus, non datur hiatus*,[2] and also with the Aristotelian faith that 'the world is not full of episodes like a bad tragedy'[3]—it is

[1] See Caxton's translation (*Temple Classics*, vol. i. p. 55).

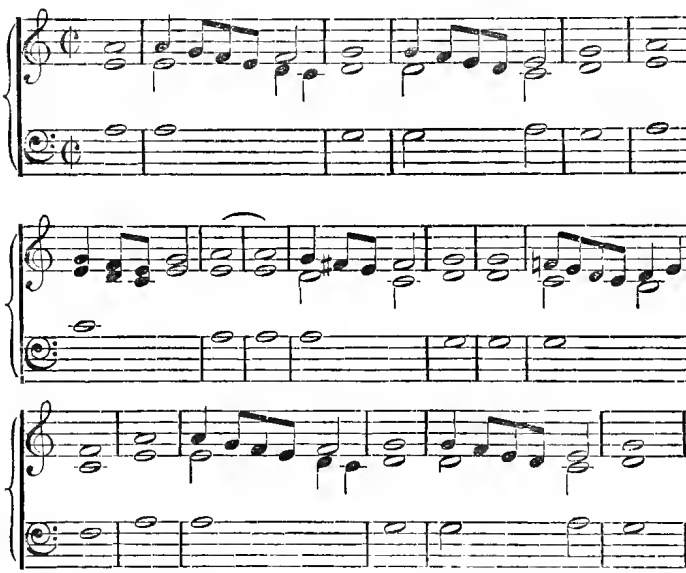
[2] See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Meiklejohn, p. 170. German paging, pp. 281, 282.

[3] *Metaph.*, p. 1090b, 1076a.

well that we should observe that even a sudden change of style is not necessarily inconsistent with an ultimate artistic unity.

It would not be difficult to prove this statement by many examples from the history of modern art. In order, however, to avoid allusions to particular works, we may take an imaginary case. It is quite conceivable that a prelude written, say, in the polyphonic style of the Troubadours,[1] should form an integral part in a musical work of which all the rest followed the laws of modern music. The Troubadour music differs from modern music, not only in being subject to peculiar laws of harmony

[1] The following part-song is attributed to Adam de la Hale—



See Ritter's *History of Music*, p. 48 (William Reeves, 1876).

and counterpoint, but also in general aesthetic character—that is, in being subject to those unwritten laws by obedience to which, no less than to those which can be definitely stated in the form of rules, the character of a style of art is constituted. Thus in the case supposed the very contrast of styles would be a necessary element within the unity of the composer's scheme. If the work were not a mere *jeu d'esprit*, but a seriously developed musical conception, then we must regard the whole composition as subject to laws which determine how this development is to take place, and therefore the very violation of law—the transitions from the laws of the one style to those of the other—would itself be subject to a law of more comprehensive kind. Such an example is sufficient to show that unity of conception and plan may exist where there is no complete uniformity either in respect of obedience to rules or in respect of aesthetic character. For any one, then, who on other grounds is disposed to believe in a future life, but is held back because he feels that such a change of physiological conditions as is implied in a resurrection from the grave is incompatible with the unity of the world as a system, it might be well worth while to work out this analogy in detail: since a rational hope of Heaven assuredly implies a conception of the Universe at large, such that this Present Life and a Life of Glory can both of them be contained within it consistently with aesthetic unity and with the reign of Law. The discussion of such an analogy will throw light not only on this special miracle, the Future Life, but upon the question of all miracles in general.

There remain, however, harder problems than that of

the miraculous as such. The belief in a future life can hardly be expressed without our needing to employ at some point the words 'infinite' and 'eternal'. The problems of infinity and eternity will be found incapable of ready solution. Solution is indeed impossible apart from a thorough-going criticism of the ideas which these conceptions involve. And thus we are carried at once into the distinctive province of the philosopher.

The same result follows from a treatment of other religious problems also. We cannot without a philosophic 'criticism of our categories' deal really adequately with the problems of Evil, of Freedom, or of God. If then we have come to the conclusion that theology is bound to develop systematically the optimistic hope which Christianity implants in the human breast, there is a further conclusion which follows from this one: namely that the theologian should lay to heart the advice of Mr. Bradley to be 'in earnest with his metaphysics'. Experience indeed shows convincingly that theology must take its choice. A theology which consistently refuses to be philosophical must in the end degenerate into mythology. Those questions, therefore, of idealistic criticism, which in many human pursuits we may safely ignore, cannot be ignored without loss when we come to deal systematically with the beliefs of religion.

NOTE.

'The modern world', it may be suggested, 'will not be brought back to a clear faith in the resurrection of the body, till theology has answered certain questions which modern physical knowledge will put to it, as the simpler questions which occurred to the medieval mind were answered by St. Thomas Aquinas. Is the scene of the future life to be some part of the Solar System, or some locality outside it? Or

is the physical Universe to be so completely remodelled, that the words 'Solar System' will become unmeaning? Or, again, may we decline these questions on the ground that Space and Time are merely the 'forms of our intuition', and that there is, therefore, no need to exhibit the hopes and beliefs of religion in a spatial and temporal representation?'

Such problems cannot be profitably discussed apart from a general discussion of Idealism.

If human consciousness is real, and Time 'mere appearance', then we seem compelled to adopt in some form a doctrine of the 'timeless Self'. But need the 'timeless Self' be conceived precisely as it appears in the philosophy of T. H. Green?

The 'Self' is commonly thought under the category of 'Substance', in the sense in which Substance is the 'correlatum of change'. But in its more fundamental significance, Substance is rather the 'correlatum of *attributes*'. To think of a 'thing' as 'that which has attributes' is more natural, even to plain common sense, than to think of it as 'that which changes.' Now—since the 'Self' of yesterday and the 'Self' of to-day have *different* attributes—ought not the Self to be thought of rather as a 'plurality of connected substances' than as 'one single substance'? (The Self of yesterday was 'in pain': the Self of to-day is 'at ease'. Can these two contradictory attributes really belong to one 'substance'? Is it not just in virtue of its attributes that the Substance *is* what it *is*? Even apart, then, from a denial of the reality of Time, the notion of the self as a 'substance permanent through changes' seems to be but an illogical, though convenient, makeshift).

The question would then arise, How far on this theory can we give an adequate account of the world—an account true to the facts of moral and physical experience? If Time is not real, the supposed changes in the Self are not real either. If then we replace our common conception of the Self as 'one substance remaining permanent through change' by the conception of a number of 'non-temporal selves'—distinct substances connected by a partial community of attributes, by the sense of moral responsibility, and in other ways—if,

further, we regard the existence of such 'selves' (our own and 'other people's) and the experiences they contain (together with the laws by which they and their contents are prescribed and in various ways connected) as comprising the whole truth of the Universe, can we state this hypothesis in such a way as to justify the methods by which in science and common life we seek for knowledge?

In reflecting on this subject there are two things which it may be well to bear in mind.

(1) The antithesis 'matter v mind' is not identical with the antithesis 'object v. subject'. My pain of yesterday is the 'object' of my present knowledge. Unless my memory is a delusive dream, the pain which I remember is independent of, and distinct from, my remembrance of it: and the Self which felt the pain as real as the Self which without feeling it remembers it. This is a simple truth which some statements of the doctrine of the 'timeless self' seem to ignore. Is the reality, then, of this 'Self suffering pain', which is the object of memory, dependent upon its being 'really in past time' just as memory represents it to be? or may we say that while this 'suffering Self' is *real*, its 'pastness' is an illusion?

(2) The chief arguments by which we may deny the absolute reality of Space are just as valid *mutatis mutandis* against the reality of Time. (E.g. 'Space must be conceived under mutually contradictory predicates: as a *quantum*, and as *not* a *quantum*; as having size yet no size in particular; as a Whole containing parts, and yet *not* a whole, since no cubic area, however large, can be such that in it "none of the parts" of space "are lacking"' etc., etc., etc.)

The treatment of the subject by Mr. Bertrand Russell, and by Mr. H. A. Prichard (*Kant's Theory of Knowledge*) is worthy of the most careful study, even by those who are not disposed to find such reasoning conclusive.

## CHAPTER XVII

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AND THE INCARNATION

LET us now again pause to take note of the results which we have reached. These may be brought under three headings.

We have seen, first, that a very great part of our religious belief is based—not on the argument from authority nor on any chain of reasoning—but directly on moral insight and other personal experiences. The theology of Ritschl consciously traces these doctrines of the faith to the source from which, in all ages, the devout soul has unconsciously drawn them. Thus our first task is boldly to apply the Ritschlian method wherever it is applicable.

We have found, secondly, that the Ritschlian method can accomplish only part, and not the whole, of the theological task. If faith in Duty is one 'grain of mustard seed'[1] faith in the rationality of the world is another. Unless this latter principle is interpreted in an optimistic sense[2] it becomes—as we saw—too vague to have any meaning. But if it is interpreted as it has been inter-

[1] Cf. chap. i.

[2] The 'rational' universe might be—as Dr. Rashdall argues—a sort of 'infernal machine', or indeed *anything else* that could be described under general principles. See Chap. xv.

preted above, then its consequences are of the most far-reaching character. A theology which, in singleness of aim, should set itself to the carrying out of these two principles to their results would be a 'free theology' in its methods, however conservative it might happen to be in its conclusions.

Thirdly the constructive task to which, on this reading of its duty, theology is called, brings us into contact with idealistic criticism. If any form of Idealism is correct, it follows that apart from a thorough recasting of our common conception of the Universe no serious advance in systematic theology can take place.

What would be the effect on theology if these three principles were accepted? It does not seem possible at the present moment to look very far ahead. If a principle is sound we may leave its consequences with Him Who sees the end from the beginning. We may venture, however, to forecast some of the more immediate effects to which these principles will lead, and to illustrate them by a brief consideration of the Doctrine of the Trinity.

To suppose that this doctrine is a mere 'embarrassment to religion', retained solely in the interests of a too conservative orthodoxy, is a pure mistake. The belief in the divinity of Our Lord—even if accepted on Ritschlian grounds and in a Ritschlian sense—cannot be left unrelated to our general Theism. The Ritschlian Christology, like the older one, needs reconciliation with Monotheism.

The 'Trinitarian' problem, then, is far from being

a gratuitously accepted burden. It arises in the first place because the Christian Church from the beginning has been compelled by the clear witness of experience to recognize the Godhead of the Holy Ghost. This witness is constant in all ages. We can all learn—if we will—to distinguish the 'Inward Voice' which has a claim to our obedience from rival inward voices which tend to obscure its authority. When we have once distinguished this 'Voice' from the others, we find that its claim upon us is quite absolute. Therefore, if it is to be theologically described, it must be described not as an 'emanation from God' merely, or as a gift of God—as much as this might be said of other elements in our conscious life—but as God Himself.

It is equally a matter of experience that the Spirit testifies of Jesus: and testifies that His law—when we have distinguished it from the various misrepresentations of its meaning—is one which the awakened soul can never disobey without self-blame. No higher conception of the Will of God can be framed than the conception of a Will which is binding absolutely upon the conscience. Jesus is our God because in all things He is our lawful Master.

Thus the only open question on this subject—for those who have accepted Christ as their God on the testimony of the Inward Voice—concerns the Godhead of the *Creator*.

The heresies, however, which reduced the Creator to the level of a Demiurge, whose work Jesus came to correct, were, of course, decisively rejected. The whole influence of Jesus is against them at every point. In spite of the facts of evil, the Christian can still see the Universe at large as an embodiment of the same Holy Will

which has manifested itself more unequivocally by the Spirit in the heart and by Jesus on the stage of history.

The same problem therefore arises for us as arose for the early Gentile Church. How are we to reconcile this threefold application of the Divine Name with the claims of that Greek and Jewish Monotheism from which Christianity has never tried to cut itself free? What is the relation between the Christology which is the product of knowing Christ 'after the inward man', and the Monotheism which is reached by the Argument from Design?

Not only the Orthodox Dogma, but the heresies also, were attempts to answer this question. How then does Orthodoxy stand to the heresies? Is Hume right when he says that the latter were always the more 'reasonable'?

It would be truer to say that the heresies were 'clearer' in the sense in which 'all shallows are clear.' What for example could conceivably be shallower than the doctrine which passes under the name of 'Sabellianism'—the suggestion that 'God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the diverse capacities in which He acts'? It is plain that this doctrine denies in effect the reality of the 'filial relation' of Jesus to the Father: and it is not too much to say that the problem could never have arisen if it had been capable of so simple a solution.

Arianism, again, denies the supreme claim of Jesus to our homage—a claim which in the genuine Christian consciousness is prior to, and clearer than, the belief in the Godhead of the Creator; since it is not as mere 'World-maker' that the Father is recognized as God

but primarily as the Father of Him Whom the Christian acknowledges as Lord.

As against these heresies, then, the orthodox dogma has the merit of recognizing and uniting some of the most important of religious truths. It recognizes, first, that the Spirit which speaks in our hearts speaks with absolute authority: secondly that the same high claim belongs to the 'law of Christ' as this law is embodied in Christ's Person and life: thirdly that the older rationalistic Theism which saw in the world sufficient evidence of divine creation and control was, so far as it went, a sound way of thinking: and lastly that these three beliefs, if true, cannot be mutually incompatible; that the Church must therefore strive to weld them together within a single doctrinal system.

To admit that this last task was accomplished with some measure of success is to admit the religious value of the Trinitarian dogma. In truth, wherever this dogma is taught faithfully, even if unintelligently, it seldom fails to produce some good effect. To learn the supreme claim of the Inward Voice, and of Jesus, to our obedience; to learn to look on the Power which rules the world as the Father of Jesus Christ; are genuinely religious lessons. And when even a child has learned to know God in these three ways—so long as the knowledge is religious and not merely dogmatic—it will never occur to him to think that he is thus learning to believe in more Gods than One.

The attitude, however, of a 'free theology' towards this doctrine must differ in some respects from that of the

ordinary orthodox schools. The doctrine of the Trinity is in fact rather the *statement* of a problem than the *solution*[1] of it.

There are of course many writers, even of the narrowest school of orthodoxy, who are ready on occasion to take this view—who admit that the doctrine is 'negative rather than constructive'; a defence against error rather than a final and satisfactory description of the nature of God; a product of Greek thought and therefore not wholly above the reach of philosophic criticism.

Yet in making this admission they at the same time tolerate—or even use—language inconsistent with it. 'God'—it is said—'Who alone knows the mystery of His own Nature, has told us[1] that "eternal generation" and "procession" are the best words which the poverty of our language can supply by which this mystery can be expressed.' The conclusion is drawn that we are bound to use these terms, even if we do not precisely understand their meaning.

Thus it becomes a matter of real importance to religion to insist that the doctrine of the Trinity did not drop down from Heaven. Unless the doctrine is to be reverently laid up in a napkin, we must insist on the right to deal with it freely.

That it was not in any supernatural sense 'revealed', that its origin is not particularly 'mysterious', seems to be becoming daily more plain as a pure matter of history.[2]

But the claims of modern theology to deal freely with this

[1] See note at end of chapter.

[2] Cf. Loisy, *Autour d'un petit Livre*, p. 151. La formule ecclésiastique n'est point mystérieuse; du moins, son origine et son contenu logique sont assez clairs, cf. p. 153f.

Dogma do not depend solely upon history. Let us suppose that it could be proved that its origin was more sudden and unaccountable than recent research suggests.[1] It is not clear that the Dogma would gain authority by this demonstration: it might reasonably be argued that it would rather lose it. But in any case this is not the fact we are most concerned with. We are concerned, in this connexion, rather with the present than with the past. Whatever its origin, the Doctrine still retains its hold, in Protestant no less than in Greek and Roman Catholic lands. It is an instrument for expressing truths which are still of value to the religious consciousness. If then we find it a good but somewhat imperfect instrument for expressing our own beliefs, it seems a plain duty that we should subject it to a frank and open criticism.

How clear a title the doctrine has to our respect we have partly seen already. If the early Church had taken a kind of 'Ritschlian' line—had said that the divinity of Jesus was made clear by the Spirit to the pure in heart and that it was needless, or even wrong, to raise questions as to His relation to the Creator—Christianity would always have had popular rationalistic Theism as a hostile force upon its flank. And such Theism is, and deserves to be, a formidable foe. The men of highest faith will perceive readily that no theory of His relation to the Father can make Jesus any more divine than they already know Him to be. But men of highest faith are

[1] It is less usual now than formerly to ascribe the Baptismal Formula in St. Matt. xxviii. 19 to our Lord Himself. The possibility of interpolations in the first Gospel has been brought home to the minds of many by consideration of the parentheses on the subject of Divorce in St. Matt. v. 32 and xix. 9.

rare: and the question 'If Jesus did not make the world, what right has He to claim to be God?' would always have been asked. Nor is such a question due wholly to lack of intelligence. It is due on one side, no doubt, to a partial confusion of thought—as what has been already said will have shown. It is due on the other to the rooted optimism of the human mind, which is unwilling to believe that any one, or any thing, can be morally greater than the power by which the whole of reality is ordered.

Thus we may fairly say that the Greek Fathers, starting with the perception of the absolute supremacy of Jesus, and with the particular Theistic conceptions which they had inherited, were logically compelled to adopt just the view they took up. 'To subordinate the ethical'—says Ritschl—'to the idea of the cosmical is always characteristic of a heathen view of the world.'[1] It is surely clear that, for the early Gentile Church, there was no other way of subordinating the 'cosmical to the ethical' except the method they adopted. Is not the Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father the one doctrine by which the Christian estimate of Christ and the common rationalistic Theism can be united? To have perceived this, and to have had the courage to carry the conviction out in a systematic manner, is a work of genius. To expect the Christians of the Fourth Century to institute a philosophic criticism of rationalistic Theism itself would be to expect one age to do the work of another.

But the work of the Christian Fathers has a value which is permanent. Popular theology — as distinct from popular religion—pictures God as living in time, as a person among other persons, as in some sense external to

[1] Ritschl, op. cit. p. 25.

the world. Now though, in his higher thoughts of God, even the simplest religious man unconsciously corrects this notion, no one can, or ought to, dismiss it altogether. For one and all of us, this quasi-pictorial representation of God is necessary for the purposes of the religious imagination. And here the superiority of orthodoxy over the heresies is peculiarly obvious. To say that before the creation of the world God 'did live and love alone' [1] furnishes at least a far better mental picture than the thought of a Unipersonal Being absorbed through an 'eternity of idleness' [2] in the contemplation of His own perfections.

But the difficulties of the Trinitarian formula are as obvious as its advantages. 'The Three Persons of the Trinity'—said Feuerbach[3]—'are not only *Unum* but *Unus*: God is a personal being consisting of three persons.' The phrase lies open to criticism; but it serves at least to indicate the difficulty of applying to God the usual conception of self-conscious personality. It may also lead those who regard the Trinitarian dogma as faultless to a clearer definition of their position. When they use the Trinitarian formula—we may ask—what exactly do they conceive themselves to be asserting?

According to a common definition personality is essentially exclusive: it involves the notion of conscious experience which is absolutely private and peculiar to him who possesses it. On this view God, before the creation

[1] Hymns Ancient and Modern, 162.

[2] Shelley's *Queen Mab*, vii.

[3] *The essence of Christianity* Miss Evans' translation. The reference is to St. Augustine or to the Athanasian Creed.

of the world, must be either lonely, or must be conceived of as broken up into distinct centres of personal consciousness. Indeed, on such a view, all persons divine and human must be essentially lonely to the end—strangers who, so far as their inmost being is concerned, do not intermeddle with one another's joy.[1] Thus perhaps one of the greatest services the doctrine of the Trinity has rendered to human thought, has been that it has served to keep before the mind of man the possibility that conscious life may be lived under conditions which do not conform to that extreme conception of the essential privacy of personal existence which dominates much of our language—a conception which really seems inconsistent with the simplest and commonest exhibition of friendship and mutual insight. It cannot, however, be denied that a dogma which leads us to think of a 'personal being consisting of three persons'—to speak of God as 'Him' and also as 'Them'—is difficult to reconcile with the very conception of personal consciousness upon which it appears to be built.

No one indeed can reflect long upon this subject without being confronted with difficulties of every kind. The author of the *New Pilgrim's Progress*[2] speculates as to the manner in which in their childhood the 'brethren of the Lord felt and thought' about 'the brother who was only a brother to them, however much He might be to others a mysterious stranger, Who had stood face to face with God above the clouds.'

[1] On this subject, and on many of the other questions touched in this chapter, see M. Webb's *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*. See esp. p. 252.

[2] Chap. xvi., *sub. fin.*

It is characteristic of the sincerity of modern thought that men should have sought to picture in detail what the life of God Incarnate could have been: and at the same time should have refused to be satisfied with a view which 'simply puts in juxtaposition, during Our Lord's earthly life, the divine and human consciousness' and 'represents Him as acting and speaking now as God and now as Man'.[1]

We find something strangely repellent in treating the scene in Gethsemane as an incident in the history of One Who is living a 'double life': in conceiving the agony as affecting only an outlying part of His consciousness, a part of Him which is related to His divine nature as is a 'drop of water to an ocean of wine': so that while apparently in agony He is really serene and happy 'above the clouds'.

The more we dwell on these thoughts the more difficult does the common notion of the Incarnation become. Nor is much help afforded by the doctrine of a divine 'Kenosis'. The criticism of Ritschl—'This way of confessing Christ's Godhead is a ceremony that has lost its meaning'[2]—does not apply to the particular form in which the 'Kenosis' theory is chiefly influential in England.[3] In this latter form of the doctrine, the Eternal Word is conceived as ceasing—by the voluntary action of His own self-limiting and self-restraining Love—to 'exercise divine functions'[4]: and there is moreover a

[1] Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 97.
[2] P. 411, E. tr. German paging, 388.
[3] Gore, p. 94.
[4] Ib., p. 94: those divine functions which are 'incompatible with a truly human experience'.

definite refusal to attribute to Our Lord 'simultaneously omniscience as God and limitation of knowledge as man'.[1]

Yet the difficulties even so are immensely great. If we are to take seriously the function of the Eternal Word in the government and preservation of the world, what is to be conceived as happening to the Universe during the season of His partial ignorance? If, on the other hand, while He is 'so truly living under human conditions as Himself to be ignorant' the Eternal Word continues omnisciently to direct the course of events, this would be tantamount to dividing Him, in 'Nestorian' fashion, into two persons, and to a denial of the real divinity of the Jesus Whom we know—and this would be in fact a denial of the very belief which is the religious basis of the whole doctrine.

Again the deliberate repression of omniscience by an act of will seems hardly more compatible with a 'really human experience' than omniscience itself. It is inconsistent with real human childhood that the infant God should be conceived as 'remembering His experiences above the clouds'. Is His childhood any more really human if conceived as a time when He deliberately decided to forget them?

If these difficulties are such as the theologian cannot well ignore—if they suggest that the Trinitarian dogma needs a more drastic rehandling even than that which it has received in relation to the doctrine of the Kenosis—in what direction are we to look for a solution?

It seems a fairly obvious suggestion that we should give our minds first of all to 'theology' in the narrower

[1] Gore, p. 97.

sense: that is, to an accurate definition and explication of the religious conception of God. While popular theology tends to 'finite' conceptions of God—and thinks, for example, of God as 'Cause', and of the world as 'Effect'—the truly religious instinct always corrects these errors. According to the popular dogma of Free Will, man's choice of good or evil is wholly his own. God gives the occasion—the call—but to man alone belongs the decision. Yet who would carry this theory into his acts of worship? 'For that Thou didst call me by Thy grace, I thank Thee: for that I responded to Thy call I thank Thee not: I rather offer Thee my congratulations.' From allowing his devotion to sink thus to the level of his doctrinal belief, even the severest of theologians is kept back—if not by reverence, then by sense of humour. Again if God were simply the Cause, and the world simply the Effect, some third term would be required to bind these two terms together: and while we should have ground for thanksgiving to God for His gracious intentions, our gratitude would belong in equal degree to this third term—to the principle, or law, or whatever it be, which effects that these intentions should be carried out. But to the religious spirit, of course, such divided gratitude would be absolutely repugnant. It was remarked by a witty High Churchman that some people have the same unreasoning dread of Pantheism as others have of Popery. There is a type of Pantheism, no doubt, which Christianity must decisively reject. Yet there is a sense in which all self-consistent Theism is Pantheism: since Religion seeks in God the Ultimate, the Absolute, the All-inclusive.

We have seen already how Plato finds the ultimate basis of the world in Ideas; how he represents all things

as following from the meaning of the 'Idea of the Good'. On this theory it is in some such formula as 'the self-necessity of the Good' that the truth about the Universe must be summed up. Now, mysterious as Platonic language will always sound, some conception of this kind is after all necessary, if we are to explain fully the position which religion assigns to God. God—we may say—is the ultimate and all-inclusive Law, conceived as conscious of itself. To popular religion such expressions are not congenial. But it does not follow that they are not a true representation of its meaning. Christian Theism consistently rejects the notion of an ultimate Fate to which God is subordinate. As Christianity identifies God's Will with the Moral Law, so also Christianity identifies God's Will with the ultimate necessity of things, the ultimate law of the Universe. It is not easy to see how a divine Will so conceived can be separated from the reality in which it issues, the events which it wills. In the necessary law 'The world must be so' is included the reality 'So the world is'. In other words, God is inevitably regarded—as religion never hesitates frankly to regard Him—as 'all in all'.

To Spinoza the human mind appears as a 'part' of the 'infinite intellect of God'.[1] If the doctrine of the Trinity is partly an expression of revolt against the common conception of personality, it leads us among other things to inquire whether human self-consciousness can be conceived as included within the self-consciousness of God. Or are we to assert—on the other hand—that the exclusion of God from full participation in our conscious life is necessary to the assertion of our independent personality[2]?

[1] *Ethics*, pt. II. Prop. XI.

[2] 'What'—the reader may ask—'is the conclusion to which

Such questions suggest, then, that one of our first duties is to be in earnest with our Theism. At some points the difficulty would undoubtedly be eased by the acceptance of an idealistic theory. This seems specially plain in regard to such difficulties as arise from the doctrine of Christ's 'pre-existence'. But apart from particular problems it is clear that a Theism which is in earnest will seek to be philosophic; and the philosopher, whether he accepts Idealism in any of its forms or not, must at least not ignore it. And before we talk much of solutions we need a just estimate of the magnitude of the problem.

these arguments are intended to lead? We know what is meant by a personal consciousness. Are we then to regard God as One personal consciousness or as Three?' To regard God as a 'unipersonal' being—as simply one knowing and feeling mind—is eminently unsatisfactory. Knowledge is posterior to, and dependent upon, the truth it knows. Thus a God who was merely a Conscious Mind would not be God at all, would not be independent and unconditioned. God must therefore be taken to include within Himself the world which He knows.

The conception of Christ as including within Himself the whole of a perfected humanity, which is at the same time the complete organ and adequate habitation of the Holy Spirit, is suggested by several passages in the New Testament. It may be by some such thought as this that the solution will ultimately be reached. If Humanity, united in Christ, is in truth the 'fulness' of God (Eph. i. 23); if 'all that God is, He imparts and reveals'; if to know all conscious experience and its laws would be to know the whole truth concerning the Universe; then perhaps the questions concerning the solitary existence of God before the world began may be dismissed as idle nightmares of the imagination.

The mutual indwelling of God and Humanity, as conceived in Scripture, is not to be confused with the barbaric doctrine of a soul which *first* has a separate existence, and *then* is absorbed (or reabsorbed) into God. The latter is akin to the pure thoughtlessness which conceives Time as *followed* by an existence which is timeless.

There are questions suggested by the treatment of the Trinitarian dogma in modern literature, which give the theologian ample scope for thought.

What, for example, is the bearing of theories—like that of Professor J. G. Frazer[1]—which would derive the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity from barbaric doctrines of a divine Father, Son, and Mother?

What again is the value of the Trinitarian speculations of Hegel? Christian theology can hardly be satisfied till it has demonstrated that the divine 'Persons' could neither be more nor less than three. But have we any clear conception as to how this may be done?

What ground, again, have we for believing Christ to be a unique phenomenon in the Universe? It has been argued that if any other man evinced the same filial attitude towards God, he would have the same claim as Christ has to divine Sonship. As a mere abstract statement, the argument is sound enough. For those however who connect with Jesus their conception of the unity of history—who find His pre-eminence just in this, that He has gathered together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad—the supposition can hardly seem to have much real importance. Are they then justified in replying that the occurrence of 'another Jesus' is inconsistent with an optimistic conception of the world?

Further, what are the separate beliefs which are involved in religious faith in God, and how far are these consistent with one another? The ultimate and all-inclusive law of the Universe is conceived by religion as a 'Person to Whom we can speak'. If then God's Will prescribes and includes our existence, and therefore our separateness from Him and from one another, how are we to define

[1] *Golden Bough*, vol. ii. p. 3 note.

the exact sense in which human persons are separate from God? If we accept Spinoza's statement that our minds are 'parts' of the intellect of God—or any variant of this view—how are we to distinguish this from a theory which either treats men as merely subjective incidents in a dream dreamed by God: or else treats God as only another name for Humanity at large?

A faith which has the courage of its convictions will be stimulated and not discouraged by the multitude of the problems which await solution. True beliefs cannot be inconsistent with one another. When therefore we have once seen that the doctrine of Christ's divinity is based, not on mere tradition, but on genuine religious experience, we shall then reasonably expect that the entanglements in which, in its assertion of this doctrine, theology has become involved, will not be found in the end to be beyond all hope of our unravelling.

NOTE.

It may be objected that language such as is quoted above (p. 183 'God Who alone knows the mystery . . . has told us, etc.') would be adopted nowadays by no theologian of repute. It is true that our more eminent writers prefer a different phraseology. Yet they continue to speak of the doctrines of the Creeds as 'divinely revealed *facts*'—in the sense in which the 'facts' given in experience are contrasted with the 'theories' by which we explain them. For Dr. Illingworth (*Reason and Revelation*, pp. 142–143, cf. pp. 72–75) the Trinity is a 'fact', and a 'historic fact'. Dogma is (p. 132) 'epitomized or condensed history'. It states facts 'whose character as facts rests on the authoritative statements of Jesus Christ' (p. 129). Very similar language has been

employed by Dr. Wace (See a paper circulated by him to the members of the Convocation of the University of Oxford in April 1913). We may compare also the following sentence from a review (in the *Oxford Magazine*) of Dr. Sanday's *Christologies Ancient and Modern*: 'On page 168 there is a curious phrase "Whatever the Homoousion means", which in this context suggests (though it does no more than suggest) that the Homoousion is somehow *there*, fallen down out of heaven as it were, to be understood if possible, but anyhow to be accepted'. The reviewer justly hesitates to attribute this view to Dr. Sanday—a hesitation which will be shared by all the most cordial admirers of Dr. Sanday's work. Such expressions, however, give us the right to demand that on this question theologians should express themselves with the utmost clearness.

Is the 'eternal generation of the Son,' then—and the same question may be asked with regard to all the propositions which together constitute the Doctrine of the Trinity—a *datum* or an *inference*? That the pre-existence of our Lord was inferred in the first days of the Christian Church seems clear—in spite of the argument of Ritschl (op. cit. p. 379, E.T. 401)—from Philippians ii. 6–8. The question at issue here is not whether this inference is correct, but whether the doctrine belongs to theology or to history. That all who know Jesus as He is—all who really know Christian experience from within—unite in assigning to Him a place in the esteem of mankind which none but God can rightly occupy, may justly be spoken of as a 'fact'. It is the very datum of experience and history which Christian theology sets out to explain: and we may justly allege that he who is a stranger to this experience is thereby disqualified from grasping Christian theology in an adequate manner. When, however, our minds pass from the statement that for the Christian soul Jesus has 'the value of God' to the statement that He was 'begotten of the Father before all worlds', this conclusion, however undeniably correct we may believe it to be, is surely at the same time unquestionably inferential; and belongs, not to historical description but to reflective theology. Must it not, then, submit itself to rational criticism?

It may be objected, again, that no orthodox writer would now maintain that the doctrine of the Trinity is a 'solution' of the problem of the divine Nature. It is true that our orthodox leaders are at times willing—only too willing—to belittle the intellectual achievements of the Age of Councils. 'The Christian dogma', exclaims Dr. Illingworth light-heartedly, 'explained nothing'. He even suggests that it was not 'intended' to explain anything (*Reason and Revelation*, p. 128). Yet Dr. Illingworth himself has argued with great force, in another context, that Theism—far from being a mere statement of observed *facts*—is part of a philosophic *theory* of the world ('Theism, and all that it involves, lies in the region of philosophy,' p. 166), and that the Doctrine of the Trinity is 'the natural climax to which Theism logically leads' (p. 238). The contradiction between these two views is obvious (cf. also *Journal of Theological Studies*, April 1903): and it serves to show how unlikely it is that the opinion that dogma is 'condensed history' will ever be consistently maintained.

But, if once we recognize that the Doctrine of the Trinity 'belongs to philosophy', we cannot refuse to ask how far it solves philosophic problems. Did the Age of Councils lead to any intellectual advance? Has it taught us anything concerning the nature of God?

We may venture, perhaps, to answer this question in some such propositions as the following: (1) Theism, as Dr. Illingworth admits, is itself a philosophic theory—an attempt to account for certain spiritual and other experiences. (2) The Doctrine of the Trinity presents itself as an emended or developed Theism, a fuller theory required by the further facts brought to light in the experience which is specifically Christian. (3) Like all theories, it is an attempted solution of the problem which brought it into existence. And, even if it had done no more than to bring the relevant facts together, and to suggest the conditions under which alone the problem can be solved, we might still claim that it possessed a high intellectual value. But (4) the theory is, in part at least, a failure. It leaves us with what appears to be a paradox—a 'personal Being consisting of three persons': and even the mere *appearance*

of contradiction is a mark of imperfect intellectual success. (5) But is the contradiction apparent or real? Is it due to defects of language, or inherent in the thought? Does the doctrine need elucidation only, or a thorough-going revision? Has it in any measure solved the problem, or has it merely thrown light upon its character by exhibiting the difficulty of the solution? We may answer these questions variously. Yet any view which maintains that the Fathers made a real advance in knowledge of the divine nature, is more respectful than the suggestion that they merely summarized in a compendious manner the statements of the Fourth Gospel.

The fault, surely, of much recent theology is that its writers are devoid of intellectual hope. They believe that, so far as Christian doctrine is concerned, the Voice of the Holy Spirit has been silent for long ages. They do not expect more light upon the mystery of the divine nature: there is no evidence that they even wish for it. The suggestion that we, with our better intellectual equipment, might conceivably make as great an advance in doctrinal definition as was made in the days of the Councils, they would dismiss as almost an irreverence. Their efforts are directed, not so much to the interpretation of the ancient phrases—for why interpret that which was 'never intended to explain anything'?—as to the mere justification of our right to go on using them. They write as if our Saviour had promised to be with us 'always, even unto the end'—not 'of the world' but of the 'first six centuries'.

The appearance of *Foundations* has raised a storm, both of criticism and of enthusiastic praise. It is surely the latter which is the more appropriate to the occasion. The theology of Mr. Streeter and his six companions—in striking contrast with much that has preceded it—is all on the side both of open-mindedness and of hope.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## THE TASK OF THE FUTURE

IT will be admitted—even by many who are quite out of sympathy with the aims of the present volume—that the Doctrine of the Trinity is at any rate one of the subjects on which Theology has not yet said its last word. And there are other doctrines with regard to which the same admission will still more readily be made.

There is, first, the doctrine of the Atonement. The history of this doctrine, no doubt, will be copiously dealt with by the anthropologists: and it is quite in accordance with the best traditions of theology that we should seek for light in this quarter. Yet more important even than its history, is the general thought which it embodies.

It is not always noticed that in the religious desire for 'atonement', 'cleansing', physical or spiritual 'purification', there lies hid a genuinely philosophical thought—a thought which has a direct bearing upon the great problem of Evil. The conception of a 'moral neutralization' of evil underlies the simplest notion of punishment and revenge. The evil deed remains, and so do some of its consequences: but its offensiveness is in a measure

removed by the avenging act.[1] The extension of this conception so that it may be applied to all the sin and all the evil of the world, conveys, at the very least, a profoundly important suggestion: and it is just this—the universal application of a Jewish and Pagan belief—which first comes to light in the Christian doctrine of the Atonement.

There is, again, the question of Miracles. This is a subject which concerns both the philosopher and the historian: and for neither has the debate yet come to a close.

It is assumed by some that the philosophic case against the credibility of miracle is overwhelmingly strong. But is this really so? It is worth while, at least, that we should weigh well a suggestion made by Lotze. 'Conformity to a universal law'—he says—is not the only conceivable form in which we may make that supposition of a 'universal relation of mutual dependence between all things real' which is the 'common foundation of all scientific investigation'. Things may be conceived as 'related to each other not primarily by permanent laws but by the unchangeable purport of a plan'; and the realization of this plan may require from the several elements 'not always and everywhere an identical procedure, but a changeable one.'[2]

[1] Esther vii. 10. The question at issue is this—Can evil which has actually existed be 'neutralized'? The case of punishment is a specific example of this general notion of 'moral neutralization'. The ceremonial washings of the Old Law are another. It is not implied that the death of Christ is punitive.

[2] Lotze. Metaphysic, vol. i. p. 18, Eng. tr. See chap.

So far as the historical aspect of the matter is concerned it is natural that we should first reverently examine the utterances on this question which are attributed to our Saviour Himself. The most immediately relevant facts are briefly these. Jesus expresses a clear disapproval of the desire of the Jews for a sign from Heaven; and two of His temptations result in a definite refusal to perform a miraculous work. Yet He is represented as teaching that when due occasion comes, even the most stupendous miracles are within the reach of those who have insight into God's plans, and sufficient faith not to impede God's working by their own distrust. 'If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain Remove hence to yonder place and it shall remove.'[1] 'Sayest thou "If thou canst"?—all things are possible to him that believeth.'[2] 'Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to my Father and He shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels, but how then should the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?'[3]

That the first of these passages appears to belong (as does also the story of the centurion's faith[4]) to the 'non-Marcan source', where the interest in miracles is but secondary, adds much to its importance for our present purpose.[5]

xvi. above. Cf. also Dr. Rashdall's admirable remarks on causation in *Contentio Veritatis*, p. 52.

[1] St. Matt. xvii. 20.

[2] St. Mark ix. 23.

[3] St. Matt. xxvi. 53, cf. Mark i. 40; v. 34, etc.

[4] Cf. also, 'If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils', Harnack, § 29. Many of our Lord's most notable sayings seem quite inseparable from the miraculous occurrences with which they are connected.

[5] See Harnack. *Sayings of Jesus*, Eng. tr., pp. 131, 163. If the conversation with the centurion (Matt. viii. 8–10 occurred

It has been argued that Jesus, finding Himself possessed of mysterious powers of healing, was impelled by pity to use them for the benefit of sufferers—even at the risk of giving a wrong impression as to the essential purpose of His mission. But these circumstances, though they might have justified the miracles themselves, would assuredly not justify the words which Jesus uses concerning them. In such a case would He not have had the will, and have known how to find the means,[1] to disclaim powers which He did not possess ?

There is, thirdly, the question of Sacraments. There are at least two qualifications which must be possessed by the theologian who is to deal successfully with this great subject. The first is an insight into the meaning and value of the sacramental life. No one can write an adequate theory of the Eucharist who has not in that Sacrament himself found Christ to be the Bread of God Which came down from Heaven. It is a common error to regard the Catholic estimate of Sacraments as evidence of a non-Evangelical reliance on external works. In truth,

in the alleged context—or in anything resembling it—it is difficult to resist the conclusion that a 'notable miracle' was performed : and that our Lord had absolute confidence in His power to perform it.

[1] Cf. chap. x. p. 93. The strongest evidence for our Lord's miraculous powers lies in the *theory* of miracles implied in the words attributed to Him by the Evangelists. To invent miraculous stories is easy : but to which of His early followers can we reasonably attribute the invention of this theory ? The special intellectual gifts which the originator of this theory must have possessed were not common in the Church—it may be doubted whether they existed at all—till times near our own. Cf. chap. ix. p. 80; chap x. p. 93, note 3.

this type of Christian piety—far from leading us to value the Sacraments because they are works of our own—tends rather to see in the Sacraments a witness to the truth that the gifts and purposes of God are independent of the changing moods and feelings of man.

The second qualification—surely no less necessary than the former—is a grasp of the principle that God, if God is love, can never be conceived as acting in an arbitrary manner. That in Christianity God is represented as never withholding His gifts from man on any but 'moral' grounds—that God withholds His gifts solely because those conditions are absent which alone would fit men profitably to receive them—is a position that is clearly stated by theologians of all schools when they are engaged in defending the religion of Christ against the unbeliever. But the same principle is not always so well remembered when the purpose is, say, to convince the Quaker of the importance of ecclesiastical ordinances. A systematic doctrine of Sacraments, then, would require consistency and uniformity in this matter as in others.

Fourthly, is it not clear that we need in the non-Roman Communions a Moral Theology as full and complete as that of Rome itself? This is a work for which men of our race are in some respects admirably adapted. If then we could develop a Moral Theology which should be English, or British, rather than merely Anglican, it might well be the best systematic treatment of this subject that the world has yet seen.

There are two special problems in Moral Theology—the question of Marriage and the question of the 'Doubt-

ful Conscience'—which for various reasons are becoming urgent.[1]

In dealing with the 'Doubtful Conscience' the Church of Rome has drawn the distinction between those things which are 'practically' and those things which are merely 'speculatively' doubtful. For any one who—by sermons or otherwise—has to guide the consciences of others, this distinction is of great practical importance. The earnestly religious man, dealing with these subjects for the first time, tends almost always to Rigorism. Grasping the principle that no one should act with a doubtful conscience, since 'whatsoever is not of faith is sin,' he is apt to confuse this principle with the very different demand that every act which one could ever suspect to be wrong is *ipso facto* to be regarded as forbidden.[2] The effects of this confusion may often be extremely grave; yet it is only the student of Moral Theology, or of some form of systematic Ethics, who can be sure of not falling into this mistake unawares.

The subject of the Law of Marriage is even more urgent still. Though it is only in quite a few cases out of many hundreds that any real moral doubt can arise as to whether a given marriage is lawful and binding or not, these few cases give infinite trouble to those who would state the Christian Law of Marriage in concise form. The Roman Theology of Marriage raises an immense number of difficult questions too important to be left unanswered. If we do not accept—as for the most part Englishmen will not accept—the answers which have satisfied the Roman

[1] See *Nineteenth Century and After*. Aug. 1909 ('Marriage Law in the Church of England') and *Church Quarterly Review*, July 1912 ('Probabilism').

[2] Cf. note to chap. xii. above: p. 118.

Catholic theologians, then we seem to be called on to give answers of our own. Thus would it not be well worth while to go back in this matter to first principles? For Christians, the fundamental principle of morality is that Commandment upon which all the law and the prophets hang. Is there, then, a better way of dealing with the problems of the Marriage Law than by applying this commandment directly to the various cases which arise? That this is not the method which theologians have habitually adopted it would be singularly easy to show.[1]

Again, a fully equipped theology requires a definite 'theory of knowledge'.[2] Liberal theologians—setting a

[1] By taking St. Mark x. 8 and 9 in conjunction with 1 Cor. vi. 16, we might defend on Scriptural grounds a doctrine quite unlike that which is expressed in the phrases *Consensus non concubitus facit nuptias, Consensus qui matrimonium facit est consensus in matrimonium.* Yet it is on the latter principle that the Church has consistently, and surely quite rightly, acted.

[2] A systematic theory of knowledge must deal not only with the special sources of religious knowledge, but with knowledge in general. How is our knowledge related to the things we know? It might seem at first sight as if we were limited to three possible answers. 'Either thought is the product of things (the answer of common Empiricism): or things are the creation of thought (the answer of Subjective Idealism): or there is a pre-established harmony between the two.'

Empiricism and Subjective Idealism have been subjected to searching criticism; and neither theory has stood the test well. Nor is the notion of a pre-established harmony more satisfactory than they.

Take the plainest and simplest case. When I know that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, this piece of knowledge follows from the very meaning of 'straightness'. If I know what straightness means, and if this question about the enclosing of space occurs to me, my answer is certain. Thus the truth

high value on the thought of past ages, yet protesting against the attitude of mind which 'learns nothing and forgets nothing'—have sought refuge in vague phrases which imply that what is true for one age may be false for another; that 'the time has now come' for abandoning dogmas which once were true; and so forth. Against such a conception the sound sense of the plain man is at all times in just revolt. He sees, clearly enough, that though our apprehension of truth may change and develop, truth itself is immutable and eternal. Yet he does not himself formulate any definite theory: and therefore the whole subject is left in a state of confusion which gives

itself, and my knowledge of it, both of them follow from the meaning of the terms involved. Here, then, is no merely external relation mysteriously 'established' between thought and things. Knowledge and truth are distinct, yet their agreement is no accident.

Incidentally, we may at the same time perceive that it is a false theory which argues that 'either our knowledge comes short of the truth—and fails to know things "as they are"—or else thought and truth are identical.' I, the knowing subject, am not the straight lines, nor am I their non-enclosure of a space. The axiom indeed is prior to my knowledge of it. Yet when I come to know it, my knowledge of it is complete. In such a case I know the truth 'as it is'.

Confusion, in fact, seems to have been almost wantonly caused by thinkers who have ignored the plain meaning of the verb to 'know'. It is, surely, no more possible to redefine the verb to 'know' than to redefine the verb to 'be'. If this is true, we may partly lay down the limits within which revolutionary thought is possible in philosophy. While a new 'cosmology' and a new 'psychology' may conceivably arise, which shall be not merely novel but revolutionary, it seems impossible that there should be a revolutionary 'ontology' [doctrine of the nature of being, as such] or a revolutionary 'epistemology' [theory of knowledge]. If, however, this principle were accepted, it would furnish us with a severe standard by which to judge several important works of recent times.

to the more conservative schools of theological thought an advantage to which they are not justly entitled.

Again, we need a systematic treatment of the Freedom of the Will. In the common theology of the pulpit a slavish doctrine of habit stands side by side with an anarchic doctrine of liberty. 'Sow an act'—it is said—'reap a habit: sow a habit, reap a character: sow a character, reap a destiny.' The power of habit is unquestionably great: yet the man, to whom this sentence seems to sum up the whole truth of the matter, has not yet learned the secret of Christian freedom.

In dealing with all these questions—as has been already said with regard to one of them—we might well take example by the Church of Rome. If members of the Church of England, of the Church of Scotland, and of the various Free Churches in the two countries—men whose hearts God had touched—[1] would work together in conscious co-operation, would formulate definite problems and (as the Roman theologians do) would systematically criticize one another's solutions,[2] we might arrive at considerable results even within the lifetime of the present generation.[3]

[1] Only by chance can work entered upon in such a spirit promote the special aims of any school or party. Those, therefore, who undertake it must expect no reward in the form either of popularity or preferment.

[2] On the side of Moral Theology we could not do better than to take as a starting point Dr. Rashdall's truly great book *The Theory of Good and Evil.*

[3] Is it not the *Scribe*, made a disciple to the Kingdom of Heaven,

The great difficulty is that—except in relation to questions of history—our theology appears to have lost its enthusiasm for knowledge. That St. Thomas Aquinas, —though he had practical interests to serve—was an enthusiast for knowledge for its own sake, no one who reads him could long doubt. When we turn from him to our own Tractarians, it is not easy to feel that they were in this respect his successors. For this we need not blame them. They were called to a special task. In reviving in the Anglican Ministry a sense of its divine commission they did a priceless service to their country. Yet did not their theology become, as a result, too much a theology *ad hoc*? And have we not all suffered ever since from this circumscription of mental horizon?[1] God, Man, and the Universe,—rather than the special claims of the Church of England,—are, after all, the central subjects of theological inquiry: and the unification of human knowledge is at least the Ideal, however far off be its accomplishment, for those whose study is to deserve the title of the 'Queen of the Sciences'.

who is set before us as the object of the theologian's imitation? Matt. xiii. 52.

[1] How far this criticism is applicable to the authors of *Foundations*, is a question which cannot be adequately discussed in a footnote.

## CHAPTER XIX

## THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

BEFORE, however, we can enter on any such constructive work as is here indicated, there are one or two preliminary questions to which we must give definite answers.

What—first of all—is to be our attitude towards the problem of Sin? If Liberal Theology has weakened its own powers by a vague theory of knowledge;[1] if it has weakened them still more by its association with coldness in devotion; it has weakened them most of all, and most deservedly, by inadequate language on the subject of Sin. In Liberalism, even at its worst, there is a certain open-mindedness, a certain absence of hardness, from which all the orthodox schools have something to learn. Yet Liberalism throws away every chance it has of competing with these other schools on equal terms, whenever it evinces even the smallest Pelagian tendency either in doctrine or in sentiment. For the sentimentality which denies that sin is exceeding sinful,[2] which affects to regard evil as 'imperfect good', man feels at heart a profound contempt. That the existence of evil is in the end good, is a necessary corollary of Theism.[3] Yet, in the

[1] Cf. chap. xviii.

[2] Rom. vii. 13.

[3] Rom. viii. 28; Eph. i. 10; v. 20; 1 Tim. iv. 4, etc., etc.

very act of thanking God[1] that He has 'created evil'[2] in order that it might be overcome by the power of His Spirit,—in the very act of thanking Him that He has 'shut up all unto disobedience'[3] that all might gain the priceless blessings of contrition and repentance—we must first recognize evil for what it is, or the victory over evil will not be appraised at its true value. It may be true sometimes that men are 'more sinned against than sinning', that if 'all is understood, all will be pardoned'. But, in reference to conduct as a whole, man knows that the truth is otherwise; that to confess that we have sinned 'by our fault, our own fault, our own most grievous fault', is the only statement of the matter which is true to the facts. Whatever God's responsibility for sin may be, there is at least no doubt about our own.[4] Nor—if we do not close our eyes to the evidence—is there any doubt about the deep-seated corruption of our nature. A theology therefore which is not merely to gain the ear of the modern world, but to keep it, must be as sternly Anti-Pelagian as that of Augustine himself.

In direct connexion with the doctrine of Sin stands the doctrine of Repentance. Is Repentance the sole condition of Pardon? Upon our answer to this question depends the character of the Gospel which we preach; and therefore there is no question to which a clear answer is more imperatively demanded.

The affirmative answer is stated with admirable plain-

[1] Rom. xi. 33. [2] Isa. xlv. 7. [3] Rom. xi. 32.

[4] The moral responsibility of man is not to be identified with the doctrine that such human acts as are free are therefore 'contingent'. The former is established by the clear witness of moral consciousness: the latter must be admitted, even by its defenders, to be a highly questionable philosophic theory.

ness by Dr. Moberly.[1] 'Whether God forgives a man or not,' he says, 'depends wholly and only upon whether the man is or is not forgivable. He who *can* be forgiven by Love and Truth, *is* forgiven by Love and Truth, instantly, absolutely, without failure or doubt. In God, forgiveness upon the necessary conditions so acts as if it were self-acting—penitence, so far as it is penitence, never by any possibility failing of pardon.'

Though the doctrine which these words convey is seldom denied expressly, it is often denied by implication, as, for example, when the command of Ananias to the newly-converted Saul[2]—'Arise and wash away thy sin'—is taken to imply that Saul received forgiveness, not upon his repentance but upon his subsequent baptism. The motive of this literal exposition is obvious. Yet even for its special purpose it seems entirely needless. The admission that outward ordinances play a part—that for mankind at large they play an indispensable part—in the ministry of reconciliation, seems quite compatible with the belief that true penitence leads unfailingly to pardon. If, however, the two views are to be put into direct opposition—if we have to choose between the belief that the new convert was immediately forgiven on repentance, and the contrary belief that pardon was deferred till all due formalities had been completed—it seems hardly conceivable that we can long remain in doubt between them. That Pardon follows inseparably upon repentance is surely the very essence of the Gospel of Christ. And need we hesitate to say that here we have a truth which

[1] *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 57, 60. The quotation s not quite continuous.

[2] Acts xxii. 16. See e.g. Dr. Mason's *Faith of the Gospel*, p. 289 (edition of 1892): Dr. Darwell Stone's *Holy Baptism*, p. 35.

stands at a higher level than any other doctrine of our religion, in respect both of its certainty and of its importance?

Less important to religion than the doctrines of Sin and Pardon, but hardly less important to theology, is the question of the source or sources of our religious knowledge.

We are all familiar with the Antithesis between 'Reason' and 'Revelation'. It will be admitted that on all non-religious subjects our knowledge is derived from Reason applied to the subject-matter which is given us in Experience. Are we to hold that for religious purposes this method is insufficient, and that here our knowledge is derived partly from Reason, but partly also from Revelation regarded as a 'non-rational' or 'extra-rational' principle? Or may we be satisfied to build up our religious creed by Reason and Experience alone?

The word 'Rationalism' has bad associations. It is associated with a spirit devoid both of delicacy and of reverence: with a shallow criticism which rejects as false everything that wears even the most superficial appearance of mystery or contradiction.

Yet this is far from being the only sense in which the term is used. 'Rationalism'—it has been said—[1] 'may be defined as the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason, and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority.'

Is there a single word in this statement towards which theology should adopt a hostile attitude? The suprem-

[1] Advertisement of the 'Rationalist Press Association,' p. ii.

acy of Reason is no more inconsistent with the supremacy of Jesus,[1] than the supremacy of Duty is inconsistent with the supremacy of God. If then we find ourselves disposed to resist such 'rationalism' as this—if we desire to maintain in any form the old antithesis between 'Reason' and 'Revelation'[2]—we ought at least to subject ourselves to a stringent self-examination. Do we desire to withdraw certain doctrinal statements from free criticism? Do we allege that we possess knowledge which is not the product of thought applied to the matter given in experience? If not, what exactly is our meaning? Above all, what is our motive?

For whatever may be the motive for this way of speaking, there can surely be little doubt about its effects. 'Our most holy religion'—says Hume with characteristic irony—'is founded on Faith not on Reason.' He therefore warns those who would defend the Christian religion 'by the principles of human reason' that 'it is a sure method of exposing it, to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure.' If we declare that our religious knowledge arises from 'non-rational' or 'extra-rational' sources, what is this but to justify Hume's estimate of the reasonableness of our Faith by the admission of its defenders?

Ought not theology then seriously to reconsider its whole attitude towards Reason? Do we not stand at the parting of the ways when we ask whether our science requires drastic revision, and this a revision on what may be called—in the best sense of the words—rationalistic methods?

[1] See chaps. x., xiii.

[2] For a reverent and temperately-worded criticism of this antithesis see Mr. Webb's *Problems in the relations of God and Man.*

The question is sometimes put to those who, even in the most moderate spirit, demand a 'reconstruction' of the theological fabric—What has happened to make such reconstruction necessary?

The question may be variously answered. 'Kant'—we might say—'has happened. Though his work is a century old, theology has not yet fully taken its bearings in regard to it.' Or we might mention other great names, —Hegel, Darwin, even Copernicus—with a similar comment.

But our answer might well take a wider range. That great and growing interest in the Middle Ages, which is one product of the Oxford Movement, has led to a general development of the historical sense. We have learned that the Catholicism of the Middle Ages was not precisely similar in spirit to the Catholicism either of the Counter-Reformation or of the Age of Councils. We have discovered how all these forms of our religion differ both from Protestantism and from Primitive Christianity. The reverent study of the past has led us to perceive that each one of the great Christian schools has had something of value to contribute to the common stock of our religious knowledge. Yet the same reverent study has instilled a doubt whether the theology of any of these periods is able to lead us to a standpoint from which we can adequately judge the religion and theology of the others. In this one fact alone, we have a clear and sufficient reason for taking our theological bearings afresh.

Such then is the task to which the circumstances of our time seem to be calling us. Are we to accept it or to decline it?

It has been well said that a man may do much good in

the world if he does not care who gets the credit of it. The same perhaps is true of a whole Church or generation. About the credit that is to be gained we need indeed hardly concern ourselves. We may contentedly enter upon labours which, for all we know to the contrary, may be absorbed entirely in the better work of those who come after. Yet though it is possible on the one hand that the work of this century may be mostly forgotten, it is also not impossible on the other that it may be as permanent as that of the Age of Councils itself. We do not know what events may occur in the future to call men away to other interests and other problems than ours: and it may be that, so far as our particular problems are concerned, it is destined that in our light men shall see light for many centuries to come.

Let us then work while it is called To-day. We stand in the line of a great succession. We have behind us—since the time of our Saviour and His Apostles—the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the Reformers. All these were bold and adventurous thinkers. It is right that we too should have the courage to frame large designs, that we should approach our task with industry and zeal yet without haste and without anxiety—not timidly eager to avoid mistakes, not anxious how or what we shall speak, since the day will try our work of what sort it is, and since it is not we that speak but the Spirit of our Father which speaks in us,—but rather daring, in reliance on that Spirit and in spite of the various criticisms with which we shall be assailed, to bring out of our treasures things new and old.

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*Printed for* ROBERT SCOTT, *Publisher*, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, *by* BUTLER & TANNER, FROME.

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